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### Multilingualism in Dublin: Home language use among primary school children: Report on a pilot survey

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**Lorna Carson and Guus Extra**

**Report on a pilot survey**

# **Multilingualism in Dublin**

**Home language  
use among primary  
school children**



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Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin.

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Lorna Carson

Guus Extra

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## 1. Introduction

Travellers who arrive at Dublin airport from abroad easily receive the impression that they have arrived in a bilingual country. However, whilst both English and Irish appear on official signage, the languages they frequently hear are Russian and Polish. Mac Éinrí and White (2008: 153) suggest that 'Ireland's historical demographic and migration profile can fairly be described as unique, at least in European terms.' Unlike its neighbours, large-scale population diversity has been a recent phenomenon in Ireland. In the 1990s, the country's economy began to prosper (referred to as the Celtic Tiger), and contributed to a reversal of the well-trodden path of Irish emigration towards England, North America and beyond. A surge of immigrants arrived in Ireland from every continent. Newcomers – professionals, seasonal migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees – along with returning Irish emigrants, created an entirely different demographic and linguistic profile in the space of a decade. Kallen (2010: 55) highlights how the 'linguistic landscape in Dublin is undergoing a profound change'. This shifting city landscape is observable both in "'top-down", official signage' (ibid: 42) in the civic domain – where state agencies now frequently provide information in Russian, Polish, Arabic and Mandarin Chinese in addition to English and Irish – through to prolific multilingual entrepreneurial signage, and even at the level of street detritus (ibid: 55).

Dublin is now a multicultural and multilingual city in which an increasing variety of languages are spoken at home next to or instead of English. Languages other than English (LOTE) co-occur and compete with English in two main types:

- Irish as an indigenous language with a longstanding history of language maintenance, language revitalization, and shift to English;
- Non-indigenous languages as an effect of international migration and inter-generational transmission.

Across Europe, research on documenting the distribution and vitality of home language repertoires of multicultural (school) populations has been carried out in a number of urban/metropolitan areas. International migration and multilingualism concentrate in such settings. The same holds for intergenerational processes of acculturation and language shift. Moreover, cities are the primary spaces where urban planners create local policies on multiculturalism and multilingualism, and in this way reinforce translocal and (trans)national dynamics in dealing with language diversity.

The status of immigrant languages at home and at school in six European cities has recently been documented in the crossnational and crosslinguistic *Multilingual Cities Project* by Extra and Yağmur (2004). Cooperation between the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at Trinity College Dublin and Babylon, Centre for Studies of the Multicultural Society, at Tilburg University, has been established in order to conduct a follow-up study in Dublin in which the above-mentioned languages co-occur and compete.

The present report gives an outline of the rationale and background of the project, and offers a description of the aims, methods and outcomes of the pilot Dublin study. Section 2 summarizes the challenges of defining diversity within multicultural population groups, and how the various criteria employed have an impact on the

quality of empirical investigations. Sections 3 and 4 provide a brief overview of Ireland's multicultural population according to the most recent national census, and within the primary educational sector. Sections 5-8 present the methodological design of the investigation, the sample population, and how the data was processed. Sections 9-13 describe and analyze the data set, focussing on the criteria of birth country, home language use and ethnicity, along with data on current language learning activities by the children. Sections 14-17 include three case studies which provide additional insight into the use of English, Irish and Tagalog amongst the children who participated in the study. Section 18 sums up the project's findings and proposes a large-scale follow-up study in Dublin primary schools.

## **2. Defining diversity of multicultural population groups**

Collecting reliable information on the diversity of population groups in multicultural contexts is no easy enterprise (Extra and Gorter 2008: 14-17). What is, however, more interesting than numbers or estimates of the size of particular groups is what the criteria are for determining such numbers or estimates. Comparative information on population figures in European Union Member States can be obtained from the Statistical Office of the EU in Luxembourg (EuroStat). An overall decrease of the indigenous population has been observed in most EU countries over the last decade; at the same time, there has been an increase in the immigrant minority figures. For a variety of reasons, however, reliable and comparable demographic information on immigrant minority groups in EU countries is difficult to obtain. Seemingly simple questions like *How many Turkish residents live in Germany compared to France?* cannot easily be answered. For some groups or countries, no updated information is available or no such data have ever been collected. Moreover, official statistics only reflect immigrant minority groups with legal resident status. Another source of disparity is the different data collection systems being used, ranging from census data to administrative registers or statistical surveys (Poulain 2008). In addition, most residents from former colonies already have the nationality of their country of immigration. Most importantly, however, the most widely used criteria for immigrant minority status – nationality and/or country of birth – have become less valid over time because of an increasing trend towards naturalization and births within the countries of residence.

For a discussion of the role of censuses in identifying population groups in a variety of multicultural nation-states, we refer to Kertzer and Arel (2002). Alterman (1969) offers a fascinating account of the history of counting people from the earliest known records on Babylonian clay tablets in 3800 BC to the USA census in 1970. In addition to the methods of counting, Alterman discusses at length who were counted and how, and who were not counted and why. The issue of mapping identities through nationwide periodical censuses by state institutions is commonly coupled with a vigorous debate between proponents and opponents about the following 'ethnic dilemma': how can you combat discrimination if you do not measure diversity? (Kertzer and Arel 2002: 23–25). Among minority groups and academic groups, both proponents and opponents of mapping diversity can be found: proponents argue in terms of the social

or scientific need for population databases on diversity as prerequisites for affirmative action by the government in such domains as labour, housing, health care, education or media policies; opponents argue in terms of the social or scientific risks of public or political misuse of such databases for stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination or even removal of the ‘unwanted other’. Kertzer and Arel (2002: 2) argue that the census does much more than simply reflect social reality; rather than merely reflecting it, it plays a key role in the construction of that reality and in the creation of collective identities. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the census is a crucial area for the politics of representation. Census data can make people aware of under-representation. Minority groups often make language rights one of their key demands on the basis of (home) language databases.

Decennial censuses became common practice in Europe and the New World colonized by Europeans in the first part of the 19th century. The USA became the first newly established nation-state with a decennial census since 1790. The first countries to include a language question in their census, however, were Belgium in 1846 and Switzerland in the 1850s, both being European countries with more than one official state language. At present, in many EU countries, only population data on nationality and/or birth country (of person and/or parents) are available on immigrant minority groups. In 1982, the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs recognized the above-mentioned identification problems for inhabitants of Australia and proposed including questions in the Australian census on birth country (of person and parents), ethnic origin (based on self-categorization in terms of which ethnic group a person considers him/herself to belong to), and home language use. In Table 2.1, the four criteria mentioned are discussed in terms of their major (dis)advantages.

<i><b>Criterion</b></i>	<i><b>Advantages</b></i>	<i><b>Disadvantages</b></i>
Nationality (NAT) (P/F/M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objective</li> <li>• relatively easy to establish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (intergenerational) erosion through naturalization or double NAT</li> <li>• NAT not always indicative of ethnicity/ identity</li> <li>• some (e.g., ex-colonial) groups have NAT of immigration country</li> </ul>
Birth country (BC) (P/F/M)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objective</li> <li>• relatively easy to establish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intergenerational erosion through births in immigration country</li> <li>• BC not always indicative of ethnicity/identity</li> <li>• invariable/deterministic: does not take into account boundary changes in society (in contrast to all other criteria)</li> </ul>
Self-categorization / ethnicity (SC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• touches the heart of the matter</li> <li>• emancipatory: SC takes into account person’s own conception of ethnicity/ identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subjective by definition: also determined by the language/ethnicity of interviewer and by the spirit of the times</li> <li>• multiple SC possible</li> <li>• historically charged, especially by World War II experiences</li> </ul>
Home language (HL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HL is significant criterion of ethnicity in communication processes</li> <li>• HL data are prerequisite for government policy in areas such as public information or education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complex criterion: who speaks what language to whom and when?</li> <li>• language is not always a core value of ethnicity/identity</li> <li>• useless in one-person households</li> </ul>

**Table 2.1** Criteria for the definition and identification of population groups in a multicultural society (P/F/M = person/father/mother) (Extra and Gorter 2008: 17)

First of all, Table 2.1 reveals that there is no simple road to solving the identification problem. Moreover, inspection of the criteria for multicultural population groups is as important as the actual figures themselves. Seen from a European perspective, there is a top-down development over time in the utility and utilization of different types of criteria, inevitably going from nationality and birth-country criteria in present statistics to self-categorization and home language criteria in the future. The latter two criteria are generally conceived of as being complementary criteria. Self-categorization (ethnicity) and home language references need not coincide, as languages may be conceived to variable degrees as core values of ethnocultural identity in contexts of migration and minorization. On the other hand, the home language question offers more perceptual transparency and societal utility (e.g., in educational and media policies) than the ethnicity question. And yet, censuses include more commonly an ethnicity question than a language question. To give an example: the UK Census of 1991 contained only the former, whereas the UK Census of 2011 will also contain the latter in terms of languages other than English (see Extra 2010 on UK question formulation). A final point is the need for multiple response categories in questions on nationality, ethnicity and home language use. In all three cases, multiplicity is a common phenomenon in multicultural contexts.

Given the decreasing significance of nationality and birth-country criteria in the European context, the combined criteria of self-categorization (ethnicity) and home language use are potentially promising alternatives for obtaining basic information on the increasingly multicultural composition of European nation-states. As a result, convergence will emerge between the utilized criteria for the definition and identification of immigrant minority and regional minority groups in such societies. The added value of home language statistics is that they offer valuable insights into the distribution and vitality of home languages across different population groups and thus raise awareness of multilingualism (Nicholas 1994).

### **3. Population diversity in Ireland**

As outlined in the Introduction, the multicultural composition of Ireland's population is a very new phenomenon. Unlike many of its European neighbours, Ireland was a nation colonized, not a colonizer. Historically, it has been a country of emigration rather than immigration, with repeated and relentless generational exoduses to the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. A rapid, and in many quarters, unexpected, increase in immigration to Ireland occurred in the 1990s, finally outstripping emigration. This has led to a dramatic alteration in the country's demographic landscape. Well-documented Irish economic growth was largely the source of such transformation. The initial peak in immigration in the mid-1990s was due to sharp rises in demands for asylum. The adoption of a 'safe country of origin' system helped expedite the application process and eliminate a processing backlog, which in the late 1990s stood at tens of thousands of asylum seekers – note that in the early 1990s, applications for asylum were only in double digits. Further peaks in immigration were due to inflows of migrant workers (both EU and non-EU), and returning Irish.

Two major political events occurred in 2004, which should be mentioned in relation to Ireland's evolving ethnolinguistic profile. An enlarged European Union opened to ten new Member States<sup>1</sup>, and provided their citizens with freedom of movement and access to the Irish labour market. Ireland was one of only three countries (along with the UK and Sweden) to allow unrestricted access without imposing work permits or quotas, and accordingly saw one of the highest inflows of migrant workers, primarily from Poland and the Baltic States (see, e.g., Singleton et al. 2009). In the same year, a referendum in 2004 on Irish citizenship made fundamental changes to legislation which previously granted Irish citizenship by territorial birth (*jus soli*). Irish citizenship is now granted as a *jus sanguinis* right, deriving from at least one parent with Irish citizenship.

It is evident from the above discussion that the demographic profile of Ireland is comprised of a multiplicity of individuals with diverse nationalities, ethnicities, birth countries, and home languages, and the criteria employed to measure diversity are dynamic and worthy of study *sui generis*.

Census data casts some light on the nature of Ireland's population diversity. As holds for other European census data, the birth countries and nationalities of individuals are elicited in the Irish national census. Table 3.1 presents census data on country of birth, recording 601,732 individuals born outside of the Irish Republic, or 14% of the total population enumerated during the 2006 census (Central Statistics Office 2007). When births in Northern Ireland and Great Britain are excluded, the census records 340,848 individuals, or 8% of total population normally resident in the country, born outside Ireland and the United Kingdom. The census conducted in 2006 records 188 different nationalities of individuals usually resident in Ireland, mostly consisting of small numbers of individuals from the range of countries mentioned. The top eight countries, each with more than 10,000 individuals present in Ireland, were (in alphabetical order): China, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America (see Table 3.2).

<b>Country of birth</b>	<b>Total persons</b>
Total population enumerated on census night	4,239,848
Country other than Irish Republic	601,732
Northern Ireland	50,172
England and Wales	204,746
Scotland	16,863
Poland	63,090
Lithuania	24,808
Other EU	78,810
Other European countries	27,517
USA	25,181
Africa	42,764
Asia	55,628
Other countries	23,050

**Table 3.1** Country of birth data, 2006 Census (Central Statistics Office 2007)

<sup>1</sup> Poland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia

<i>Birth country</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Absolute difference</i>
Poland	62,495	Poland	63,276	781
USA	24,643	USA	12,475	12,168
Lithuania	24,611	Lithuania	24,628	17
Nigeria	16,327	Nigeria	16,300	27
Latvia	13,854	Latvia	13,319	535
Germany	11,544	Germany	10,289	1255
China	11,022	China	11,161	139
Philippines	9427	Philippines	9548	121
India	9192	India	8460	732
France	9145	France	9046	99
Romania	8492	Romania	7696	796
Slovakia	8129	Slovakia	8111	18
South Africa	7576	South Africa	5432	2144
Australia	6478	Australia	4033	2445
Spain	6122	Spain	6052	70
Pakistan	5757	Pakistan	4998	759
Italy	5705	Italy	6190	485
Czech Republic	5230	Czech Republic	5159	71
Brazil	4666	Brazil	4388	278
Russia	4511	Russia	4495	16

**Table 3.2** Top twenty birth countries and nationalities compared (excluding dual Irish citizenships), 2006 Census (Central Statistics Office 2007)

It is worth noting in this consideration of census data that birth country and nationality do not always closely align (Table 3.2), as adduced in Section 2. The disparity between birth country and nationality in the case of the USA may be understood in the context of returning Irish immigrants. There are also notable disparities between birth country and nationality in the cases of Germany, South Africa and Australia.

The 2006 census also enquired about ethnic/cultural background. As the response format for ethnic/cultural background shows in Table 3.3, this question in fact is concerned principally with race. The census data records *White* as the predominant category (95%). Other races account for 3.5% of the usually resident population, with *Asian/Asian Irish* recorded at 1.3%, and *Black/Black Irish* at 1%.

<i>What is your ethnic or cultural background?</i>			<i>%</i>
White	–	Irish	87.4
	–	Irish traveller	0.5
	–	Any other White background	6.9
Black or Black Irish	–	African	1.0
	–	Any other Black background	0.1
Asian or Asian Irish	–	Chinese	0.4
	–	Any other Asian background	0.9
Other, including mixed background	–	Other, write in description	1.1
Not stated			1.7

**Table 3.3** Ethnic/cultural background, 2006 Census (Central Statistics Office 2007)

A breakdown of ethnic/cultural background information is also provided at the level of younger age groups, as is shown in Table 3.4. These data provide an insight into the diversity contained in Irish schools; it can be noted that according to the census data, 10.8% of the population aged between 5 and 9 years comes from a non-Irish or non-Irish traveller background.

<i>Ethnic or cultural background</i>	<b>0-4 years</b>	<b>5-9 years</b>	<b>10-14 years</b>
Total	300,683	287,313	272,500
Irish	252,499	253,369	245,903
Irish traveller	3,298	3,019	2,954
Any other White background	12,100	12,126	11,196
African	9,378	4,860	2,452
Any other Black background	836	395	220
Chinese	939	624	496
Any other Asian background	3,630	2,410	1,731
Other including mixed background	5,179	4,075	3,152
Not stated	12,824	6,435	4,396
Total non-Irish/non-Irish traveller	23,086	30,925	23,643
Percentage of total age category	7.7	10.7	8.7

**Table 3.4** Population classified by age group and ethnic or cultural background, 2006 Census (Central Statistics Office 2007)

In line with European Union legislation (Regulation (EC) No 763/2008) designed to harmonize Member States' national data gathering and reporting on population and housing, Ireland and all other EU countries are obliged to conduct a national population survey in 2011. Ireland, with Germany, Italy and Portugal, participated in a census pilot survey in 2009, and made a sample of the data set available to the European Union. The pilot questionnaire is available online<sup>2</sup>, along with a report on the pilot census conducted in April 2009. A number of changes in the pilot 2009 questionnaire, and comments in the report on the pilot census, are worth reporting on in this section.

The questions related to place of birth and nationality remain unchanged from the 2006 questionnaire, although the pilot report (Central Statistics Office n.d.) notes comments by respondents on the formulation of the question on place of birth (*What is your place of birth? Give the place where your mother lived at the time of your birth*). Respondents noted that their place of birth was not always the place where their mother lived.

Most noteworthy is the exclusion of the question related to ethnic or cultural background (along with a question on religion) in the 2009 pilot survey, 'in order to facilitate the inclusion of new and revised questions' (Central Statistics Office n.d.: 2). According to the report on the pilot questionnaire, this does not preclude the inclusion of these questions in the subsequent 2011 census. A new question (Q13) on 'other languages' is included: *Do you speak a language other than English or Irish at home?* A yes/no filter prompts respondents who do speak a language other than English or Irish

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cso.ie/Census/Survey\\_Forms.htm](http://www.cso.ie/Census/Survey_Forms.htm)

to record the name of the language (*What is this language?*). The examples of Polish, German and Irish Sign Language are provided. Respondents are then asked in the same question rubric, *How well do you speak English*, according to a four-point scale (very well – well – not well – not at all). The report on the pilot questionnaire notes (ibid: 11) that there ‘is strong support for the inclusion of a question on other languages from the ESRI<sup>3</sup> and the broader research community.’ The report by the Central Statistics Office divides analysis of the ‘other languages’ question by responses from individuals with Irish nationality and individuals with another nationality. Responses from those with Irish nationality indicated that 5% spoke another language at home (French was the most popular, followed by German and Spanish). Responses from individuals with nationality other than Irish indicated that just under two-thirds (64%) spoke another language at home. The report (ibid: 12) notes that the ‘languages given correlated almost exactly with nationality, raising doubts about the usefulness of capturing such a write-in’, although the Census Advisory Group supported the inclusion of the ‘other languages’ question.

#### **4. Primary education in Ireland**

This section will provide a brief overview of the organizational features of Ireland’s primary education sector, the status of languages within the sector, and the recent diversity in pupils’ ethnic and linguistic background.

In the 2007/2008 school year, there were almost 500,000 children enrolled in primary education in Ireland (Department of Education and Science 2009). Compulsory primary education in Ireland commences at age 6 until age 12 (First Class to Sixth Class), preceded by two years of pre-compulsory schooling (Junior and Senior Infants). Most children commence their primary education at age 4. Primary schooling is free in Ireland, with only a small percentage of the school population in private, fee-paying primary institutions. The current Primary School Curriculum was introduced in 1999, and is undergoing a review process. Ireland’s Department of Education and Science is responsible for the provision of formal education; the Minister for Education and Science is advised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

National primary education was introduced in Ireland in 1831. Ireland’s primary schools (usually called ‘national schools’) are almost entirely denominational. Whilst they are not state-controlled, these parish schools are state-aided for the most part, with only a few private primary schools. The majority of Irish primary schools fall under the auspices of the Catholic Church, with a small minority of Protestant (mainly Anglican/Church of Ireland and Presbyterian) schools. More recently, a small number of multid denominational schools have been established by the ‘Educate Together’ organization. One result of the denominationally organized primary education system (particularly those schools run by Catholic religious orders) is an elevated number of single gender schools when compared with other European countries.

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<sup>3</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute, Ireland



Another characteristic of primary schools in Ireland is the relatively small school size. This is a further consequence of the denominational organization of primary schools and the resulting single gender schools. Even after many school amalgamations, in the 2007/2008 school year, 47.8% of primary pupils attended a school of fewer than 100 children (Table 3.1). Schools employing three or fewer teachers are therefore common.

<b><i>National schools and pupil numbers by school size</i></b>	<b><i>National schools</i></b>	<b><i>Pupils in ordinary classes in national schools</i></b>
Fewer than 50 pupils	659	20436
50-99 pupils	851	62625
100-199 pupils	816	115039
200-299 pupils	468	113019
300-499 pupils	285	110768
500 pupils and over	79	48383

**Table 4.1** Primary school sizes in 2007/2008 (Department of Education and Science 2009)

### **Irish language in the primary curriculum**

Ireland is officially a bilingual state. However, whilst the Irish language (*Gaeilge*) is Ireland's first official language, English is the *de facto* language of communication of most of the population, with most speakers who use Irish on a daily basis residing in a small number of *Gaeltacht* regions. It should be noted that there has been a resurgence of interest and practice in the Irish language in recent years, with increasing numbers of Irish-medium schools outside the *Gaeltacht*, and particularly in urban areas. For instance, parents who send their children to Irish-medium schools (*gaelscoileanna*) may not be native Irish-speakers themselves.

	<b><i>Number</i></b>	<b><i>Proportion</i></b>
Population aged 3 years and over	4,057,646	
Irish speakers (ability to speak Irish)	1,656,790	40.8%
Non-Irish speakers	2,400,856	59.2%

**Table 4.2** Self-reported ability to speak Irish ('*Can you speak Irish?*'), 2006 census, (Central Statistics Office 2007b)

The Irish language has long been an important part of the primary curriculum, with a large proportion of school hours devoted in the past to teaching Irish language and culture. The historical reason for the prominence of the Irish language in primary schools is evident in the aspirations of the Irish Free State established in 1922, where revival of the Irish language was identified as a 'central component' in the new State's aspiration for political and cultural freedom (Byrne et al. 2000: 208). Primary schools, compulsory for all, were the obvious medium for achieving the goal of an all-Irish-speaking nation. The proportion of time devoted to teaching Irish has decreased since the introduction of the current Primary School Curriculum in 1999 (and its predecessor, the New Curriculum in 1971). However, Irish remains a compulsory subject for all pupils in ordinary primary schools from Junior Infants (age 4) through to

the final year of post-primary education, with the exception of special needs schools, and some children who have been allowed exemptions due to time spent abroad or learning difficulties.

The connection between the Irish language and the education system is apparent in the data elicited by the 2006 census of Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2007b). Categories for frequency of speaking the language distinguishing ‘daily within’ and ‘daily outside the education system’ were included in the census for the first time in 2006. The education system clearly contributes to regular use of the language (see Table 4.3). Excluding daily use in the education system, fewer than 10% of the Irish-speaking population use Irish daily or weekly. The contrast between regular use in an educational setting, and use of the language outside school, is marked. Only 7% of those who speak Irish daily in a school context also use the language outside of the education system (1.9% of the total Irish-speaking population). The Irish language in education and the role of schools – in language revival, revitalization and maintenance – remains a much discussed topic (cf. Harris 2008).

<i>Daily, within education system</i>				<i>Outside education system</i>		
Speaks Irish daily within education system only	Speaks Irish also outside education system	Daily	Weekly	Less often	Never	Not stated
453,207	31,605	53,471	97,089	581,574	412,846	26,998
<i>Percentage of total population of Irish-speakers</i> (speakers aged 3 years and over with an ability to speak Irish, n=1,656,790)						
27.4%	1.9%	3.2%	5.9%	35.1%	24.9%	1.6%

**Table 4.3** Frequency of speaking Irish (*‘Do you speak Irish?’*), 2006 Census (Central Statistics Office 2007b)

The present pilot study recognizes the essential nature of the Irish language in any investigation of language use by primary school pupils in Ireland; Irish was therefore included as one of the precoded languages in the questionnaire for the pilot study (see Section 5).

### **Foreign/second language learning in the primary education system**

Modern language provision is not an official part of the core primary curriculum, although discretionary curriculum time allows schools to include language learning other than English/Irish where they can offer it. The *Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative*, operational since 1998, aims to support the introduction of Italian, German, Spanish and French in Fifth and Sixth Classes (the final two years of primary education) in some participating schools, although this remains an initiative outside the main primary curriculum – currently about 10% of primary schools participate in the project (cf. Harris 2009; Harris and O’Leary 2009). English language support for children learning English as a second language is limited within school hours on a

quota basis<sup>4</sup>, with recent reductions in provision (cf. Lyons and Little 2009 for a discussion of this issue in the post-primary sector in Ireland).

### **Home language instruction**

No provision is made for home language instruction within the Irish education system. There are no nationally organized or funded home language instruction programmes for immigrants or their children. There are however a number of community-based language maintenance initiatives, such as Saturday schools in Russian, Polish and Lithuanian, amongst other languages. Such schools are often supported by national embassies, and provide language and cultural education. There is as yet no provision for in-school home language support within the primary or secondary curriculum.

The end of secondary cycle examination (the Leaving Certificate) may be taken in a number of languages in addition to English and Irish, referred to as 'non-curricular EU languages'. In 2009, students who met certain criteria<sup>5</sup> were able to sit the examination in the following languages: Latvian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Modern Greek, Finnish, Polish, Estonian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Swedish, Czech, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Danish and Dutch. There are, however, no integrated bilingual programmes for the languages listed. Other than Irish language medium primary schools, bilingual primary education is available in French and English at the *Lycée Français d'Irlande* and in German and English at St Kilian's German School.

### **Language, ethnicity and nationality of primary school children in Ireland**

The Introduction to this report has already referred to how the Irish demographic and educational landscape has changed significantly in recent years; this is particularly visible in Ireland's schools (Devine 2005). Principals of six primary schools who reported to the Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Science in 2010 described the challenges they face in supporting children in a multi-ethnic/multicultural society; the cases of schools in the west of Dublin were presented, amongst others, to the Joint Committee, where the percentage of pupils' parents born outside of Ireland was between 87% and 95%. Government press releases (Hanafin 2008; Lenihan 2008) refer to 160 nationalities represented by students in Ireland's post-primary schools. A publication from the European Centre for Modern Languages in 2007 (McPake and Tinsley) reported 158 languages in use in Ireland in addition to English. Data from the Department of Education and Science's 2007/2008 census (cf. Walshe 2009) of 3,108 primary schools shows that 9.6% of children attending primary schools were born outside Ireland, with 23,226 born in an EU country, and 20,703 born outside the EU.

However, these data do not allow any extrapolation of children with Irish nationality born to non-Irish parents, or children and parents with Irish nationality who are from a

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<sup>4</sup> Based on numbers of eligible pupils enrolled and pupils' assessed levels of language proficiency

<sup>5</sup> Be from a Member State of the European Union; speak the language in which the pupil opts to be examined in as a mother tongue; have followed a programme of study leading to the Leaving Certificate; take English as a Leaving Certificate examination subject.

non-Irish ethnic background. The proportion of non-Irish born children is not shared equally between schools, although it is interesting to note that recent immigration to Ireland is not an exclusively urban phenomenon. Many rural schools report a high percentage of children born overseas. In the 2007/2008 primary school census, the school with the highest percentage of children without Irish nationality (69.1%, cf. Walshe 2009) was located in Co. Donegal. This is exacerbated by the small size of many Irish primary schools. Of the top ten schools which reported the highest numbers of overseas children in 2007/2008, only one school was located in the Dublin City school district. However, whilst rural schools have a high percentage of non-Irish born children relative to the Irish-born population, Dublin schools deal with greater absolute numbers of overseas pupils.

This section has examined the context of primary education in Ireland, the new diversity of its school population, and the provision of language learning – first, second, foreign – within the primary curriculum. The next section will address the challenge of constructing a questionnaire to gather language data from Dublin’s primary school pupils.

## **5. Designing the questionnaire for a home language survey**

### **Aims**

The rationale for collecting, analysing and comparing multiple home language data on multicultural school populations derives from at least four different perspectives (Extra 2010):

- taken from a demographic perspective, home language data play a crucial role in the definition and identification of multicultural school populations;
- taken from a sociolinguistic perspective, home language data offer valuable insights into both the distribution and vitality of home languages across different population groups, and thus raise the public awareness of multilingualism;
- taken from an educational perspective, home language data are indispensable tools for educational planning and policies;
- taken from an economic perspective, home language data offer latent resources that can be built upon and developed in terms of economic chances.

Home language data put to the test any monolingual mindset in a multicultural society and can function as agents of change (Nicholas 1994) in a variety of public and private domains. Taken from an educational perspective, for instance, it remains a paradoxical phenomenon that language policies and language planning in multicultural societies often occur in the absence of basic knowledge and empirical facts about multilingualism.

### **Prerequisites**

A number of conditions for the design of the questionnaire need to be met (Extra and Yağmur 2004: 112-114). The first prerequisite is that the questionnaire should be appropriate for all pupils and should include a question for distinguishing between

pupils in whose homes only the mainstream language is used and pupils in whose homes one or more other languages next to or instead of this language are used. For the most frequently mentioned languages, a home language profile will be specified. This language profile consists of four dimensions, based on reported language proficiency, language choice, language dominance, and language preference.

A second prerequisite of the questionnaire is that it should be both short and powerful. It should be short in order to minimize the time needed for pupils to answer it during school hours, and it should be powerful in that it should have an optimal and transparent set of questions which should be answered by all pupils individually, if needed – in particular with younger children – in cooperation with the teacher, after an explanation of the aims and design of the survey in class. The survey consists of 18 questions which should be made available to schools in enough copies in a uniform double-sided printed format.

A third prerequisite of the questionnaire is that the answers given by the pupils can be scanned and verified as automatically as possible, given the large size of the resulting database. In order to fulfil this demand, both hardware and software conditions have to be met.

### **Outcomes**

The 18 questions have been distributed over different boxes and have been formatted for automatic data processing as is shown below. In the main study, the total number of scanned variables per informant will result in a large database, given the total number of informants aimed at. Cross-national equivalence between the home language survey questionnaires will allow for cross-national comparison of the distribution and vitality of immigrant minority languages as major dimensions.

# Many children, many languages!

Trinity College Dublin

in cooperation with Tilburg University

Please fill out this form in black or blue ink.  
**Do not use a pencil!**

1. School code:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2. Pupil code:

--	--	--	--	--

3. How old are you?

- |                         |                          |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 6 | <input type="radio"/> 9  | <input type="radio"/> 12 |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 13 |
| <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 11 |                          |

4. Are you a boy or a girl?

- ☐ Boy  
☐ Girl




Please answer the questions below by colouring the circles. Countries not mentioned can be filled out in the boxes above the last columns.

China  
Germany  
Ireland  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Nigeria  
Poland  
United Kingdom  
USA

5. In which country were you born?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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6. In which country was your father born?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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7. In which country was your mother born?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Many children, many languages!

Continue with question 8 on the next page!

Please answer the questions below by colouring the circles. An ethnic group not mentioned can be filled out in the boxes above the last column.

	Anglo-American	English	German	Han Chinese	Igbo	Irish	Latin-American	Latvian	Lithuanian	Polish	Russian	Yoruba	Other group
8. To which ethnic group do you belong?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the questions below by colouring the circles. Languages not mentioned can be filled out in the boxes above the last columns.

	English	German	Igbo	Irish	Latvian	Lithuanian	Mandarin Chinese	Polish	Russian	Spanish	Yoruba	Other language 1	Other language 2
9. Which language(s) is/are used in your home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Which language is used in your home most often?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Which language(s) can you													
- understand?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- speak?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- read?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- write?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Which language do you usually speak at home													
- with your mother?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- with your father?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- with your younger brothers or sisters?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- with your older brothers or sisters?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- with your grandparents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- with your best friends?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Which language do you speak best?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Which language do you like to speak most?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Which language(s) do you learn at this school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Which language(s) would you like to learn at this school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. In which language(s) do you take classes outside this school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. In which language(s) do you watch TV or videos?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Discussion of question formulation

- Q1+2 The school code and pupil code should be filled out by research assistants before the forms are distributed in the classroom in the main project phase. In the case of the pilot study, pupil codes were not utilized; schools and classes were assigned a simple alpha-numeric code. The resulting database contains no data that can be traced back to individuals. No names of individual pupils were stored. The completed school codes make it possible to determine the number of participating pupils per school and school district and to determine the distribution of languages (types and tokens) per school.
- Q3 The chosen age range is dependent on the chosen ambition for the research project, in particular with respect to younger children, which requires additional time and money. The chosen age range makes it possible to carry-out pseudolongitudinal analyses.
- Q4 This question allows for a wide range of possibilities to study gender effects.
- Q5-10 Pre-specified categories are provided for the top ten countries, ethnic groups and home languages, estimated on the basis of the most recent national statistics about immigrant minority groups/children. In addition, there is room for additional handwritten information. The answers to these questions make it possible to compare the status of birth country data, home language data and ethnicity data as demographic criteria.
- Q8 The ethnicity question is much less transparent than the home language question, in particular for children. The ethnicity question provides some additional hints about ethnic background. In analyzing the data, the focus is on language groups, not on ethnic groups.
- Q9 This question is aimed at a maximum scope from two different perspectives, i.e., by the passive construction *are used* instead of *do you use*, and by asking for use instead of one of the four language skills.
- Q11-14 In all cases, deliberately except for Q11, *do*-scales rather than *can*-scales are used.
- Q11-14 The language profile, specified by questions 11-14, consists of four dimensions:
- language proficiency: the extent to which the pupil can understand/ speak/read /write the home language;
  - language choice: the extent to which the home language is commonly spoken with the mother and father, grandparents, younger and older siblings, and best friends;
  - language dominance: the extent to which the home language is spoken best;
  - language preference: the extent to which the home language is preferably spoken.
- Q11 allows for studying reported oral skills vs. literacy, Q12 for studying patterns of intergenerational language maintenance vs. shift, and Q13/14 for studying divergent age-related patterns of language dominance vs. preference. Taken together, the four dimensions of language proficiency, choice, dominance and preference result in a language vitality index, the calculation of which is explained in Extra and Yağmur (2004: 125-128). This index will allow for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analyses.
- Q15+16 The answers to these questions allow for educational considerations, e.g., in terms of reported (mis)matches between the offer and demand of languages at school.
- Q17+18 Related to other types of language input.



## 6. The pilot study

### Rationale

Whilst there are a number of demographic instruments in Ireland which provide data on some aspects of language proficiency and use, such as the national census and the Department of Education and Science annual census of schools, the instruments are not always appropriate for investigating immigrant language use. It can be difficult to access information which is not made easily available, or to collate data gathered from different instruments. Often national census data only reflect legal residents of the State, or residents who feel comfortable completing such a document. Data collected on Ireland's primary school population by the Department of Education and Science include children's nationalities, but do not provide for any investigation of ethnic or language groups.

The rationale of conducting a pilot study was to develop a research instrument tailored to the profile of primary school pupils in Dublin, both in relation to the precoded languages, birth countries and ethnicities on the questionnaire, and to the Irish school system and curriculum. It was determined that piloting the questionnaire in two schools would provide enough representative data to tailor the questions, the precoded content and answer format in the questionnaire in order to administer a more apt instrument to the wider sample population of primary pupils in the planned main project phase in the Dublin City district (see Section 18).

### Selecting the schools

Dublin has is often cited as an example of urban sprawl, where low-rise, low-density housing has led to the creation of large suburban areas on the fringes of the city. The geographical restrictions of the Irish sea on the east side of the city, and the Dublin and Wicklow mountains to the south and south-west have also contributed to extensive tracts of housing constructed in the west and north west of the city, and to a widening of the 'Greater Dublin' area. According to the 2006 Irish Census, the population of the greater Dublin area is 1,187,176. Dublin is comprised of four districts: Dublin City (506,211 inhabitants), Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (population 194,038), Fingal (population 239,992) and Dublin South (population 246,935). One of the main rationales in approaching schools was to locate pupils who would not participate later in the main project phase, thus moving the choice of schools to those beyond the central Dublin City district.

Two primary schools were invited to participate in the pilot study, through the Principal (head teacher) in each establishment. School A is a large Catholic denominational single gender (girls) school located in Fingal County Council in the west of the city. School B is a small Protestant denominational mixed school in located in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council in the south of the city.

Finding a 'typical' Dublin primary school is impossible given the variables of denominational/multidenominational, single/mixed gender, public/private and English/Irish medium schools. The choice of a large and a small school, a Catholic and Protestant school, and a single gender and mixed gender school was considering appropriate for the aims of the pilot study.

## **7. Approaching the schools and conducting the survey**

The Principal in each primary school was contacted by a project researcher, and invited to participate in the pilot phase of the project. In School A, the researcher was invited to address all staff and present the project, its aims, the questionnaire and the administration process. In School B, the researcher was invited to visit the school and present the project individually to the Principal, who then invited other teachers to participate in the project. Instructions were provided regarding completion of the questionnaire. The project was greeted with enthusiasm in both schools, and the researcher agreed to return after the results had been collated, and provide some charts and graphs about languages for the school notice boards.

It was agreed that the end of the summer term would be the most appropriate juncture for questionnaire administration, given the lightened teaching load approaching the summer vacation. Questionnaires were delivered in person to School A at the end of May 2009, and to School B in the middle of June 2009, and returned several weeks later.

### **Ethical research issues**

International and national guidelines on the ethical conduct of research projects, particularly when dealing with children, necessitate a number of accompanying documents when asking children to complete a questionnaire. The ethical issues related to research conducted with human subjects are compounded when dealing with children, due to their legal status as minors (thus involving the inclusion of parents/carers in the consent process), their developing maturity and the concept of assent. The notion of informed consent/assent is related to obtaining the child's agreement to participate in the research. There is also an obligation to maintain confidentiality in data collection and storage, which limits data access to named researchers, and for the purposes explained to parents and children. Essentially, the most pressing concern when conducting research with children is to protect them from any risk or harm (including psychological harm) which could arise from participating in the research project.

The design of the project was submitted for consideration to the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin, and approval was granted by the committee to proceed with the study. An information leaflet describing the project for parents, children and teachers was printed, explaining the rationale for the project, its aims and implementation. A parental consent form was provided, which sought parent/carer consent on behalf of their child, along with a simplified child assent form. These documents can be found in the Appendix to this report. This pack of documents, including the questionnaires, was delivered to both schools in person by the researcher.

Parental consent forms were sent home with children, and processed by teachers, as is customary in Irish schools when pupils are asked to participate in research projects of this nature. Questionnaires from these children were then submitted to a project researcher. Teachers have a variety of ways of dealing with children for whom parental consent has not been received in the timeframe necessary in the context of such

projects. Sometimes teachers may organize an alternative activity, or indeed ask all children to participate in the questionnaire but simply collect and return documents from those where consent has been provided, thus not excluding any child from the activity itself. Obtaining pupils' assent to participate in the study was carried out through an oral explanation of the project by the class teacher, and a simple written and illustrated explanation of the questionnaire's aims. It was explained to children that if they did not want to participate in the project, they could simply return the document to their teacher or stop completing it at any time.

Obtaining parental consent and pupils' assent may have had an impact on the completion rates of the survey, but cannot be circumvented. It is necessary to ensure that research conducted amongst vulnerable populations is conducted ethically, and to protect the child's rights and autonomy. In any case, pupils and parents/carers in the Irish primary school system are familiar with receiving such consent forms for both research projects and many other activities (e.g., sports/school trips), and as such are a regular part of school life in Ireland.

### **Administering the questionnaire**

In consultation with both Principals, it was determined that each school would administer the questionnaire without any help from the researcher or research assistants, during class-time. Instructions were delivered to all teachers at School A by a project researcher, and to the Principal at School B, regarding completion of the questionnaire, particularly related to the nature of a machine-readable document which had to be completed in black or blue pen, and also regarding the precoded and empty response boxes. Completed questionnaires were then personally collected at School B (providing an opportunity to receive immediate feedback on the questionnaire), and personally delivered by the Principal of School A, who then telephoned and emailed to provide feedback related to her school's experience of the pilot study.

The Irish primary school curriculum provides education for children from age 4 through to age 12. The first two years are non-compulsory, but widely attended. The pilot questionnaire was only administered to pupils in the compulsory classes, from First Class (age 6) to Sixth Class (age 12). This decision was made in consultation with the two school Principals, who determined that even with the support of research assistants, administration for the two infant classes would not be feasible. Both schools provided valuable feedback regarding questionnaire content and administration of the questionnaire.

### **Feedback related to questionnaire content**

There were no reported issues related to administering the first page (side one) of the questionnaire, which asked pupils' age, gender, birth country, and birth countries of their parents.

The question related to ethnicity evoked the issue of how to deal with multiple responses, and dual ethnicity. Many children who were not ethnically Irish wished nonetheless to tick 'Irish' for their ethnicity, despite the fact that they were ethnically Nigerian, for example. This echoes reported data in the Irish media and in immigration

studies in Ireland related to hybrid identities, where self-designations such as 'Nigerian-Irish' and 'Filipino-Irish' are becoming increasingly common parlance in immigrant communities. Such designations prompt us to permit dual ethnicities under this rubric in the main study.

It was noted that the transition from ethnicity to language in the questionnaire elicited some ambiguous and thought-provoking responses and comments from pupils. Some pupils, not ethnically Irish, self-identified as Irish under ethnicity, and then wanted to indicate under the language rubrics that they spoke Irish. However, the pupils in question did not in fact speak Irish. The ambiguity arose from the perceived connection made by the children that if they were Irish, they also spoke Irish. Teachers reported that for some children, it was the first time that they engaged with this issue, and that it led to interesting class discussions related to languages in Ireland, and the status of the Irish language in particular.

Issues reported under Question 9 (*Which language(s) is/are used in your home?*) were simply that more language response boxes would be required. Teachers reported that some children needed up to four empty language boxes for their responses, particularly if local dialects were to be included. It was noted in both schools that French should be a pre-coded response in Question 9, and also in Question 15 (*Which language(s) do you learn at this school?*). Teachers noted that Question 9 in particular was very affirming for children.

Schools reported enormous excitement when children completed Question 11 (*Which language(s) can you understand/speak/read/write*), many had never thought about breaking language down into four skills, and were very proud to state which languages they were able to understand, speak, and so forth.

Question 12 asked children about which language they used when speaking to their grandparents; it was noted by teachers that this type of communication may involve speaking to grandparents on the phone, and not in person.

In the matter of which languages children would like to learn in school, some children did not realize that they could also state they would like to learn their own first language or home language in school. In terms of learning languages outside of school, teachers noted that children were engaged in many activities which integrated both language learning and other activities, for example, learning the Koran in Arabic, and learning ballet in French.

Teachers finally noted that most students were unaware of what a video is, and suggested that this item be changed to include DVD instead (Question 18).

### **Feedback related to questionnaire administration**

Teachers reported that it was impossible to administer the questionnaire to First Class pupils (age 6) as a whole class. Questionnaires were administered individually. For Second Class pupils (age 7), two administrators were required. From Third Class upwards, there were no reported issues, and the questionnaire was administered by the class teacher to the whole class.

Whilst very positive feedback was received from both schools regarding completion of the questionnaire and the project in general, one drawback of using class-teachers

rather than a project researcher or research assistants was the lack of direct feedback from pupils when completing the questionnaire. However, teachers reported great excitement from pupils as they responded to the questions, and described it to be an energizing activity. One school Principal noted that it is 'a fantastic document to raise awareness about language, the school as a whole thoroughly enjoyed it' (personal communication).

## 8. Data processing

Data processing was conducted at Tilburg University in the Netherlands. Given the anticipated future size of the database in the main study, an automatic processing technique based on specially developed software and available hardware was developed and utilized (see also Extra and Yağmur 2004: 116-118). Because some questionnaire items were answered in handwriting by the pupils, additional verification of these items had to be done using character recognition software. After scanning and verification was completed, the database was analyzed using the SPSS program. Four different phases were involved in data processing. Each of these four stages is described below.

### Phase 1: Design, testing and printing of the questionnaires

A special commercial software packet (*Teleform*) was used for all aspects of data processing such as scanning, verification, and exporting the data for storage and analysis. *Teleform*, in combination with an optical scanner, allows the user to design, read, and evaluate any kind of form. By means of this particular software, data can be processed with high speed and accuracy. After interpretation and verification of the scanned data, the software can automatically export the data to a specific database so that it can be analyzed. The software has three components: the designer, the reader, and the verifier. The designer allows the user to create any combination of shapes, texts, drawings, and data entry fields. Commonly used data entry fields are supported, including alphabetic, numeric, and alphanumeric constrained print fields, comb-style print fields, choice fields, entry fields, and image zones. As the questionnaire was created, it had to be defined how the data in the fields would be evaluated and how the information would be stored in the database. Once the format is designed, it can be used over and over for processing. For automatic processing of the data, the completed questionnaires had to be printed neatly and uniformly; stained, crooked, or invisible marks hinder data processing. The completed questionnaires needed to be legible and to comply fully with the original version, otherwise data processing would be impossible. The original version of the questionnaire was designed using *Microsoft Word* and then adapted to be used by *Teleform* software. All the answer fields in the questionnaire were defined for accurate recognition by the *Reader*. There were two main types of answer categories (see Section 5). The relevant circles should be filled out using a dark pen so that the *Reader* could identify the answer categories. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that preprinted answer categories would cover more than 90% of all answers given. There were also chains of boxes in which hand-printed data could be entered. By means of its *Optical Character Recognition*

capability, the software can recognize and process hand-printed data. Therefore, answers that were not preprinted on the questionnaire could be written by hand; e.g., if the answer to the question which asks for the name of the country in which the child was born, was not one of the countries already preprinted on the questionnaire, then the country of birth could be written in the boxes provided. As the software can recognize hand-printed characters, all answers given (irrespective of their number) were stored in the database.

### **Phase 2: Scanning, interpretation, and verification of the data**

After the questionnaire had been printed, distributed to schools, filled out by the children, and returned, the filled-out forms were made available for data processing. When the forms were fed through the scanner, the *Reader* automatically interpreted hand- and machine-printed text. If the form had no fields or characters that would need review when the form was interpreted, the data was sent directly to a predefined data file (see below). If the form had characters or answers that could not be interpreted, the field was marked for review and the form was held for verification. As the *Reader* interpreted the data on returned forms, it identified those forms that had been incorrectly completed or incorrectly marked, and held them for manual review and correction. The process of confirming or correcting such forms is called 'verification' and is done using the *Verifier* software. By means of this software, each form's image could be reviewed and corrected on the computer, without the need to view a printed copy. If a form was interpreted without the need of verification, the data was automatically processed and exported to a predefined SPSS data file without going through the *Verifier*. If one or more characters or answers on a form did not satisfy the *Reader's* confidence test or if a field did not pass a validation test, the form's image was automatically sent to the *Verifier*. Data accuracy on returned forms was enhanced by a number of important features, including hand-print recognition, optical character recognition, selective key form image zones, user-defined character recognition confidence thresholds, and basic script validations.

### **Phase 3: Coding, preparation and analysis of the data**

After verification had taken place, all answers were transmitted to a database. This database could be accessed by SPSS. Before the data could be prepared for analysis, a number of coding stages needed to be completed, in particular with respect to handwritten references to countries and languages. Before the analyses could be implemented, the database needed to be prepared for the analyses. This preparation had three objectives:

- tracking down and correcting incomplete categories in the database; this mainly concerned a final check of the correctness and consistency of the database; three main types of control were involved: a visual check of the questionnaires, an evaluation done by means of verification software, and, finally, an automatized internal check by SPSS;
- making the database uniform; the answer categories concerning preset languages on the questionnaire and hand-printed languages needed to be standardized to make a consistent and uniform database available for analyses;

- optimizing some answer categories by making them suitable for statistical analyses.

In order to carry out systematic analyses on the data set, a SPSS syntax file which was developed step-by-step was used in the preparation stage. In the analysis stage, another SPSS syntax file was used in order to achieve uniformity of the findings.

#### **Phase 4: Reporting of the results in the format of tables and figures**

The last stage of data processing was transmitting the outcomes of the analyses in a readable format. In presenting the results, *Excel Worksheets* and *Microsoft Graphics* within *Microsoft Word* were used. Both the worksheets and the templates for figures within *Microsoft Graphics* were predefined. In this way, a uniform format for all the tables and figures could be achieved, which then need to be interpreted.

## **9. Sample properties**

The data set assembled in this pilot study comprises responses by 191 children in total, from two different schools in the greater Dublin area. In School A, 168 children completed and returned a questionnaire; in School B, 22 children did so. The completion rate for School A was 63%; School B's completion rate was 55%. Completion rates are undoubtedly impacted by the logistics of sending home and sending back to school parental consent forms, as well as the 'research fatigue' that many schools experience. Against this background, coverage of 63% and 55% is promising for the main phase of the project. Tables 9.1 and 9.2 provide distributional data on gender and age.

	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>Total</i>
Boys	0	10	10
Girls	168	12	180
Missing	-	-	1
Total	168	22	191
Completion rate	63%	55%	-

**Table 9.1** Distribution of informants and gender across schools

The marked difference between the numbers of responses from each of the two schools is explained by disparities in size and denomination of Irish primary schools across the city of Dublin and Ireland at large (see Section 3 for a more comprehensive discussion). Almost all primary schools in Ireland are denominational. School A is a large primary school under Catholic patronage; the vast majority of primary schools in Ireland fall under the patronage of the Catholic Church. School B is a very small Protestant primary school. This small size is typical of most Protestant primary schools. Our choice of sample for the pilot study sought to reflect some of the complexities of the Irish primary sector in this regard.

As noted earlier in Section 3, the denominational nature of Irish primary schools has also led to an elevated number of single gender schools. School A is a girls' school, whilst School B is a co-educational institution. This is reflected in the gender distribution of the data set. In School A, 168 girls completed a questionnaire; in School B, the sample comprises 10 boys and 12 girls. It is important to note the difficulties in finding a balance between school size (large or small), denomination (Catholic, Protestant, non-denominational, multi-denominational, and so forth) and single gender/co-education for a pilot project of this size. Finding two schools willing to participate in the appropriate timeframe and satisfying all the variables described above would have been beyond the aims of the pilot study under report.

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
6	6
7	30
8	24
9	27
10	24
11	28
12	24
13	7
Missing	21
Total	191

**Table 9.2** Distribution of informants across age groups

The age spectrum represented in the data set shows a spread of ages from 6-13 years. This reflects the eight-year primary cycle of Irish schools. Compulsory schooling commences at age 6 (although most children attend from age 4). Note that ages 6 and 13 represent the extremes in the spectrum, with a markedly lower frequency than ages 7-12. As mentioned in Section 7, teachers reported difficulties in administering the questionnaire to first grade pupils (aged 6/7) as a whole class; for Second Class pupils (aged 7/8), two teacher-administrators were required. It should also be noted that within the data set of 191 responses, 21 children did not record their age in the rubric provided. The response format for this question must therefore be improved (perhaps made more visible) in the main study in order to ensure more comprehensive recording of informants' ages.

## 10. Birth country references

Data collected on birth countries was elicited by three questions, which sought to determine the birth country of the pupil (Q5: *In which country were you born?*), the birth country of the child's father (Q6) and the child's mother (Q7). Nine precoded selections were provided, i.e., China, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Poland, United Kingdom, USA, along with three blank rubrics for handwritten responses. The precoded selections were based on the top eight birth countries as



ascertained by the 2006 Irish census (see Section 3), with the addition of Ireland as a precoded option.

The top birth country is Ireland, with 126 pupils (66% of the sample) born in Ireland rather than abroad. Only one pupil failed to complete this question (birth country unknown), which confirms the high validity of this question. Twenty-one birth countries other than Ireland were recorded by the children. Note that 65 pupils (34%) from this relatively modest sample of 191 children were born outside of Ireland. This is to be compared with the 2006 national census results which recorded a much lower percentage of foreign births: 14.8% of the total Irish population who completed the census were born outside Ireland.

<i>Pupil</i>		<i>Father</i>		<i>Mother</i>	
Birth country	Frequency	Birth country	Frequency	Birth country	Frequency
Ireland	126	Ireland	70	Ireland	76
Philippines	20	Nigeria	29	Nigeria	27
Nigeria	9	Philippines	21	Philippines	22
Poland	5	Romania	8	Romania	9
Lithuania	3	Pakistan	6	United Kingdom	7
India	3	Poland	5	Poland	5
Romania	3	United Kingdom	5	India	5
Afghanistan	2	India	5	Lithuania	4
Indonesia	2	Lithuania	4	Pakistan	4
Italy	2	China	3	Albania	3
Pakistan	2	Albania	3	South Africa	3
Saudi Arabia	2	Afghanistan	2	China	2
South Africa	2	Congo	2	Afghanistan	2
China	1	Indonesia	2	Congo	2
United Kingdom	1	Moldavia	2	Indonesia	2
United States	1	Syria	2	Moldavia	2
Albania	1	Angola	1	Syria	2
Congo	1	Bulgaria	1	Ukraine	2
Iran	1	Canada	1	Angola	1
Moldavia	1	Czech Republic	1	Bulgaria	1
Sudan	1	Ghana	1	Czech Republic	1
UAE	1	Iran	1	Finland	1
Unknown	1	Italy	1	Ghana	1
		Malaysia	1	Iran	1
		Mauritius	1	Italy	1
		South Africa	1	Japan	1
		Sudan	1	Sudan	1
		Uganda	1	Unknown	3
		Ukraine	1		
		Unknown	9		
Total	191	Total	191	Total	191

**Table 10.1** Birth country references for pupil, father and mother

	<i>2006 Irish census</i>	<i>Present study, children</i>	<i>Present study, fathers</i>	<i>Present study, mothers</i>
% of population born outside Ireland	14.8%	34%	63%	60%

**Table 10.2** Comparison of birth countries (children, fathers, mothers) and 2006 census data

A wide range of pupils' birth countries was recorded (Table 10.1). Beyond the nine precoded responses, a further 13 countries were added by children. Within the 21 countries other than Ireland, one country recurs more frequently than any other, with 20 children (31% of respondents born outside Ireland) recording their birth country as the Philippines. Immigration to Ireland from the Philippines is well-documented, particularly in the nursing sector (Barrett and Rust 2009; Humphries et al. 2008). One in two working visas between 2000 and 2006 for non-EU nurses were issued to nurses originating from the Philippines. The working visa scheme in operation in this time period also allowed for family reunification. The Filipino community in Ireland has quickly become one of the largest immigrant communities, as recorded in the 2006 Irish census (see Section 3). Filipino communities tend to cluster around hospitals, as in the case of the present study where School A is located adjacent to a major teaching hospital. The precoded options for birth countries provided for the top seven birth countries as gathered by the most recent national census. The Philippines was the eighth most frequent birth country of individuals normally resident in Ireland according to 2006 the census results, not including Ireland and the United Kingdom (Table 3.2).

The second highest number of responses relates to children who recorded Nigeria as their birth country (9 children, or 14% of respondents born outside Ireland). Nigeria appears as the fourth country in the list of top 20 birth countries excluding Ireland and the United Kingdom in the latest national census data. The third most frequent birth country after the Philippines and Nigeria was Poland, with 8% of children born outside Ireland recording Poland as their country of birth.

Following the top three birth countries of the Philippines, Nigeria and Poland, 18 remaining countries mentioned are recorded as the birth country by smaller numbers of respondents (see Table 10.1).

<i><b>Top ten birth countries Census 2006</b></i>	<i><b>% of children born outside Ireland (n=65)</b></i>	<i><b>% of fathers born outside Ireland (n=112)</b></i>	<i><b>% of mothers born outside Ireland (n=112)</b></i>
Poland	8	4	4
USA	2	-	-
Lithuania	5	4	4
Nigeria	14	26	24
Latvia	-	-	-
Germany	-	-	-
China	2	3	2
Philippines	31	19	20
India	5	4	4
France	-	-	-

**Table 10.3** Top ten birth countries 2006 (precoded responses) and present study compared

The top birth countries recorded by the respondents align closely with national census data recording country of birth of persons normally resident in the State. Of the top ten countries (Table 10.3) elicited by the census, seven are elicited by the present study. Latvia, Germany and France all figure in the top ten countries of the last national census, but do not appear in the birth countries recorded by primary pupils in Schools A and B.

Recording the birth country of individuals is one of the most frequent criteria employed in the study of diversity of population groups. Whilst it can be a useful criterion to measure inflows of recently-arrived immigrants, and is relatively easy to establish, it represents several major disadvantages as an instrument (see Section 2). The most prominent disadvantage is the obvious intergenerational erosion caused by new births to immigrant populations in the host community. In the case of this present study, 66% of children recorded that they were born in Ireland; these data do not however allow us to infer whether they are members of immigrant minority groups. The second major disadvantage in the collection of birth country data is that birth country is not an accurate indicator of ethnicity. In the case of the current study, a child born, for example, in Saudi Arabia, may have been born to Irish parents working in that country on a temporary basis. Birth country data collection therefore typically includes the elicitation both of the individual's birth country, and that of their father and mother. The following sections will consider the data gathered, related to Questions 6 and 7 of the questionnaire.

Nine children were unable to provide the birth country of their father, whilst only 3 children were unable to provide the birth country of their mother. The 'unknown' responses to the country of birth questions conform with expectations, according to their likelihood that most children, even at a very young age, are able to state their own country of birth (only 1 unknown), most know where their mother was born (3 unknown), but more may be unaware of their father's place of birth (9 unknown).

Whilst 126 children (66%) were born in Ireland, the responses related to their parents' countries of birth reveal fewer parents born in Ireland: only 37% of fathers and 40% of mothers were born in Ireland. These data substantiate the occurrence of intergenerational erosion within immigrant communities, and transgenerational shift in birth countries towards increasing numbers of births within the host community. The two top countries of birth excluding Ireland remain constant across the child's and parents' places of birth, although Nigeria precedes the Philippines as the top country of birth for parents: 26% of foreign-born fathers and 24% of foreign-born are noted as having Nigeria as their country of birth; 19% of foreign-born fathers and 20% of foreign-born mothers are recorded as born in the Philippines.

Again, of the top ten countries (elicited by the 2006 census) which provided the basis for the precoded responses for countries of birth, Latvia, Germany and France all figure in the top ten countries of the last national census, but do not appear in the birth countries recorded by primary pupils in Schools A and B. It is important to take this information into account for the purposes of the main study, and to redesign the precoded response options accordingly, with the addition of the Philippines as a birth country in light of the data obtained, and the omission of Latvia, Germany and France.

Overall, the data set confirms anticipated diversity in the birth countries elicited for children and parents, as Table 10.2 indicates, with one in three children (34%) born abroad, and two in three parents (63% and 60% for fathers and mothers respectively) also born outside of Ireland. Twenty-one countries are mentioned as places of birth for the children, with 29 different countries of birth mentioned for fathers, and 27 different countries of birth recorded for mothers. These data confirm the primary school sector as of high multicultural and multilingual nature.

## **11. Home language references**

The home language criterion is a powerful tool in ascertaining the nature of population diversity (see also Section 2). It is a complex measure, as language does not always lie at the core of ethnic/cultural identity. It engages to ascertain, from a sociolinguistic perspective, who speaks what language to whom and when. As well as providing vital educational and social data in terms of language distribution, domains of home language use are of particular value in indicating the vitality of home languages and the nature of multilingualism in diverse population groups. However, language-related questions are often poorly addressed in national censuses. If addressed at all (the most recent Irish census only asked respondents about Irish language use), they focus mostly on 'mother tongues'. Empirical investigations of home language use capture the intricacies of language practices where mother tongue classifications do not; for example many French citizens of North African descent record their mother tongue as Arabic or Berber, despite having no proficiency in the language at all. The symbolism of the 'mother tongue' – rather than a language regularly employed – 'some kind of more primal, essential or original language' (Scanlon 2001), detracts from its usefulness as a criterion in studies of this kind. The present study asked four questions related to home language use (see Section 5):

- Q9 *Which language(s) is/are used in your home?*
- Q10 *Which language is used in your home most often?*
- Q11 *Which language(s) can you:*
- *Understand?*
  - *Speak?*
  - *Read?*
  - *Write?*
- Q12 *Which language do you usually speak at home:*
- *With your mother?*
  - *With your father?*
  - *With your younger brothers or sisters?*
  - *With your older brothers or sisters?*
  - *With your grandparents?*
  - *With your best friends?*

Asking multiple and transparent questions about home language use is both a feasible endeavour and a meaningful way of collecting data about the profile of a diverse population. Investigating home language use in a large-scale survey of a school population is a potent method of determining both the distribution and vitality of language varieties spoken in a city, and provides invaluable data on the changing multilingual profile of its inhabitants.

Eleven precoded response options were provided, with two blank rubrics for handwritten responses. The precoded options were English, German, Igbo, Irish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Yoruba. As for the precoded birth country responses, the language options provided were based on most recent national census data. The decision to include Irish (*Gaeilge*) arose from the prominent position of the language in the primary school curriculum (see Section 3).

The data reported on in this section is collated from across the four questions (Q9-12) on home language use. It is not feasible to represent the various complexities of language use elicited from respondents given the small sample size and wide distribution of languages in a pilot study of this nature. Instead, three detailed case studies of home language use will be presented in Sections 15-17, reporting on the three largest language groups: English, Irish and Tagalog. Table 11.1 gives an overview of reported home languages in terms of types and tokens.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
English	171
Irish	38
Tagalog	19
Yoruba (Nigeria)	14
French	9
Romanian	9
Urdu	7
Polish	6
Igbo (Nigeria)	4
Lithuanian	4
Malay (Malaysia)	4
Spanish	4
Arabic	3
Bisaya/Visaya (Brunei)	3
Farsi (Iran)	3
Russian	3
Albanian	2
Chinese	2
Indonesian	2
Moldovian	2
Bulgarian	1
Catalan	1
Dari / Pashto	1
Hindi	1
Igala (Nigeria)	1
Italian	1
Japanese	1
Lingala (Congo)	1
Ukrainian	1
Portuguese	1
Punjabi	1
Czech	1
Swedish	1
Unknown	3

**Table 11.1** Overview of reported home languages (types and tokens)

Table 11.1 records 113 references to the use of a language other than English or Irish in the children's personal domain. When the use of Irish is added to these references, there are 151 references to the use of a language other than English in the personal domain. These frequencies, when totalled, are almost on a par with the frequency of English language use (171). It should be noted that children were able to record the use of multiple languages. Thirty-three different language varieties used at home were recorded by the children, with three unknown responses. Of the 33 language varieties recorded, 22 of the language references were contributed by the children, in addition to the 11 pre-coded responses. Unclear responses, usually due to the child's handwriting, were checked with the *Ethnologue* language database provided by Lewis (2009). The low number of unknown responses demonstrates high linguistic awareness on the part of pupils, as well as awareness of the differences between birth country and home language.

Note the clear differences between birth country references in the previous section, and home language references, which reflect the heterogeneous nature of linguistic and ethnic identity. Whilst no pupils recorded their birth in France, there are nine references to the use of French in the home. Simple mapping of birth country to home language belies the complexity of home language use: the *Ethnologue* (Lewis 2009) records the use of French in 47 countries. The current survey records nine references to the use of Romanian in the home. Again, mapping birth country and home language use in the case of Romanian descent would mask the reality that there are more speakers of Romanian outside Romania than within its national borders. Romanian is also spoken, for example, by sizeable populations in Hungary, Moldova, Israel, Serbia and the Ukraine. Whilst there are no references to a child's birth in Malaysia, and only one reference to the birth of a single father in Malaysia, there are four references to the use of Malay in the home. These references deserve further investigation within a larger sample in order to reveal the expected heterogeneous use of Malay, a macro-language with a considerable range of individual varieties spoken in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei.

In the case of Nigeria, two precoded language varieties were included in order to reflect the two largest Nigerian communities in Nigeria and in Ireland according to the literature (Komolafe 2008), i.e., Yoruba and Igbo (Ibo). Nigeria has nine official languages, and some 500 language varieties spoken within the country. It is estimated (Lewis 2009) that there are some 18,000,000 speakers of Igbo in Nigeria, and some 19,000,000 speakers of Yoruba, of a total national population of 27 million. The latest census statistics (Central Statistics Office 2007) record 16,300 individuals with Nigerian nationality as resident in Ireland. According to Komolafe (2002), Yoruba represents 77% of the total Nigerian population in Ireland, whilst Igbo represents 12%. The present survey records 14 references to Yoruba as a home language variety, and four references to the home use of Igbo. Note the reference to a further Nigerian language variety: Igala, a relatively small language variety found in Nigeria and used by some 800,000 speakers, is mentioned by one child.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, English clearly dominates the spectrum of home language use, with 171 references to its use by children, followed by Irish (38 references), and Tagalog (19 references). These three language groups will be examined in greater detail as individual case studies in Sections 15-17.

## **12. Ethnicity references**

The present study seeks to obtain information on the diversity of the population of Dublin city using the combined powerful criteria of home language use and ethnicity, along with the more standard recording of birth country. Ethnicity often remains an unaddressed criterion when gathering information on the diversity of population groups. Census data, as we have already noted, tends to focus on criteria which are objective and easier to establish, principally nationality and birth country. However, increased naturalization of individuals and births within the host community require a more nuanced means of obtaining meaningful information. Whilst asking individuals to self-categorize their ethnicity is a subjective criterion by definition, it provides for

triangulation along with other indicators, which help investigators arrive at the heart of the identity question. It should be noted that the self-categorization of ethnicity is not an 'either-or' category; increasingly multiple ethnicities are recorded in demographic investigations.

Official investigations of ethnicity in national census instruments often prove to be problematic, mainly through a lack of clarity in their definition of ethnicity. In Ireland, as in other countries, ethnicity and nationality are often popularly determined to be interchangeable categories, with the assumption, for example, that all Russians are ethnic Russians, all Polish ethnic Poles, and so forth. When administering the pilot questionnaire, it was noted by school Principals that children tended to confuse ethnicity and nationality, particularly as many children from non-ethnic Irish backgrounds held Irish passports. Race and ethnicity are often similarly coalesced. As mentioned earlier in Section 3, the most recent Irish census (2006) included a question on ethnic and cultural background, which was in fact a question on race. It enquired about respondents' ethnic or cultural background, and asked them to select one of four boxes: *White/Black/Asian/Other*, including mixed background. The *White* response rubric provided three options: *Irish, Irish traveller, Any other White background*. The *Black* rubric provided two options: *African* or *Any other Black background*, as did the *Asian* rubric (*Chinese/Any other Asian background*). The only open response rubric which allowed for self-categorization beyond the categories described above was the *Other* category. The confusion surrounding the very descriptions of and distinctions between race and ethnicity only add to the difficulties in defining and measuring the diversity of the population in Dublin.

The current study provides further information on the self-categorization of children with the provision of 12 pre-coded ethnicities, and an open response rubric. The precoded responses were gleaned from national census data, i.e., Anglo-American, English, German, Han Chinese, Igbo, Irish, Latin-American, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, and Yoruba. We expected, however, to find that several of the precoded responses would not in fact be utilized by children, particularly the references to Anglo-American and Latin-American ethnicity. The data confirm this expectation, with no references to either of these ethnicities. Nor were there any references to German, Latvian or Russian ethnicities. It is expected that administering the questionnaire to a larger sample size will provide a closer perspective on the intricacies of ethnic identity in Dublin. Tables 12.1 and 12.2 provide an overview of the reported types of ethnicity references.

<b><i>Types of references</i></b>	<b><i>Absolute</i></b>	<b><i>%</i></b>
Single references	181	95
Dual references	3	2
No references/Unknown	7	3
Total	191	100

**Table 12.1**      Types of ethnicity references



<i>Single references</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Irish	85
Filipino	21
Yoruba	17
Nigerian *	6
Romanian	6
Polish	5
Indian *	5
Igbo	4
Lithuanian	4
Pakistani *	4
Albanian	3
Moldovian	3
Afghan *	2
Han Chinese	2
Indonesian	2
English	1
Angolan *	1
Bulgarian	1
Congolese *	1
Finnish	1
French	1
Ghanese *	1
Iranian	1
Italian	1
Sudanese *	1
Syrian	1
Ukrainian	1
Total	181

**Table 12.2** Types of single ethnicity references (types and tokens)  
(\* reference to nationality instead of ethnicity)

Of the single ethnicity references, 85 children recorded their ethnicity as Irish, whilst 96 children recorded their ethnicity as other than Irish. Twenty-seven single ethnicities were recorded in total, with 12 precoded ethnicities and 15 additional ethnicities added by the children. Eight nationalities instead of ethnicities were provided by the pupils, which confirms that nationality and ethnicity are often confounded. A single nationality frequently masks a multiplicity of ethnicities within a single nation-state. In the case of Pakistan (four children recorded their ethnicity as Pakistani), nationality does not reveal whether the individuals would self-categorize as, for example, Punjabi or Pashtun. To return to the example of Nigeria, some 250 ethnicities are present within the nation's borders. Six children recorded their ethnicity as Nigerian, whilst 17 self-categorized as Yoruba and four as Igbo.

Within the range of ethnicities recorded by children, it is notable that more than half of the pupils recorded an ethnic background other than Irish. The highest response rates mirror those for birth country and home language use, with Filipino ethnicity rated as the second and Yoruba (Nigeria) as the third most frequent ethnicity. The remaining wide range of ethnicities recorded reflects the particularly diverse nature of the Dublin school population surveyed.

The three dual references (Table 12.1) noted are the spontaneous responses of children; there was no possibility to provide dual ethnicity in the present questionnaire. The three dual ethnicities recorded were Anglo-Ukrainian, Indian-Irish and Syrian-Irish. The two instances of dual Irish ethnicities recorded here confirm what seems to be an increasing preference for dual self-categories. A recent survey (Debaene and Singleton 2010: 184) of young members of the Polish community in Ireland describes how more than a quarter of that sample identified themselves as 'Irish Poles'. The issue of dual ethnicity will be therefore addressed in the main study.

Ethnicity is a complex marker of identity which evolves with individual life changes like marriage, education and migration. Migration tends to have an impact on how individuals define their ethnicity, sometimes through personal choice (in the case of dual ethnicity, often a sign of adopting the host community identity) or by compulsion (avoiding ethnic identification through adopting a more generic identity connected to nationality). The data collected by the present survey on ethnicity, when combined with home language use, provide powerful complementary criteria in determining the multicultural composition of a city's population.

### 13. Language learning references

The final section of the questionnaire addressed the issue of language learning. Children were asked four questions (Questions 15-18):

- *Which language(s) do you learn at this school?*
- *Which language(s) would you like to learn at this school?*
- *In which language(s) do you take classes outside this school?*
- *In which language(s) do you watch TV or videos?*

Almost all children record that they learn English at their school (187 responses, or 98% of the total sample), as displayed in Table 13.1. The number of children who record learning Irish at school is high: 93% of the sample. Sixty-four children state that they learn French at their school, whilst 20 children learn Spanish. As noted in Section 4, modern languages are not part of the primary cycle in Ireland's educational system, nor indeed is the study of languages other than English and Irish compulsory within the secondary cycle (although university matriculation requirements for language study have clearly had a impact on pupils' choices of subjects). French and German have traditionally been the only languages taught within the secondary education sector, but recent years have seen a diversification of languages offered, including Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese.

The children's responses here regarding language learning within School A and School B are related to their school's participation in the *Modern Languages in Primary Schools Initiative*, which supports the introduction of Italian, German, Spanish and French in Fifth and Sixth classes (the final two years of the Irish primary cycle). School A and School B participate, respectively, in the French and Spanish components of this programme. The remaining references to language learning all occur at a frequency of fewer than five pupils. The references to these languages (including, for example, Igbo, Hindi and German) may be explained by children's acquisition of other languages

typologically related to their home language through contact with other children and their families.

<i><b>Learn at school</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
English	187
Irish	178
French	64
Spanish	20
Igbo	4
Hindi	2
German	2
Chinese	1
Japanese	1
Romanian	1
Russian	1
Czech	1

**Table 13.1** Languages learned at school

The data displayed in Table 13.2 records responses related to languages children would like to learn in school. Eighteen languages are mentioned by the children. English and Irish re-occur in the responses, but the predominant language mentioned by children is Spanish (93 references, or 49% of our sample), followed by German (18%), French (16%) and Chinese (15%). It is interesting to note the popularity of Spanish, which appears to corroborate the increasing popularity of Spanish both at secondary level, within the adult language learning sector, and in other European countries. Barnwell (2008), in a review of the status of the Spanish language studies in Ireland, describes an increase in Spanish uptake of 79% between 2001 and 2007 at secondary level, whereas French and German both suffered downward enrolments. Barnwell reports a similar growth in uptake of Spanish in Sweden (ibid.).

<i><b>Like to learn</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
Spanish	93
German	34
French	31
Chinese	28
English	16
Irish	16
Polish	12
Yoruba	10
Italian	9
Russian	8
Igbo	7
Latvian	5
Japanese	4
Lithuanian	3
Portuguese	2
Tagalog	2
Albanian	1
Hindi	1

**Table 13.2** Languages children would like to learn at their school

Children were also asked about language study outside school. When asked '*in which language(s) do you take classes outside this school?*', 104 pupils responded positively, listing 16 different languages in which they took classes. Table 13.3 records their responses. Here, the study of English outstrips all other languages mentioned (73 children, 38%). When the diversity of the current sample is considered, along with the limited English language support currently available within the primary curriculum, it is not surprising that English should occur here. However, it should be noted that School A reported some confusion related to this question's formulation. Children were asked: *In which language(s) do you take classes outside this school?* – which was understood by the children to refer to classes where English is simply the medium of communication, and not subject of study. The formulation of the question will be therefore reconsidered before the main project phase.

<i>Classes outside school</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
English	73
French	7
Urdu	4
Spanish	3
Arabic	2
Chinese	2
Irish	2
Japanese	2
Malay	2
Dari / Pashto	1
Igbo	1
Lithuanian	1
Moldovian	1
Tagalog	1
Yoruba	1
German	1

**Table 13.3** Languages learned outside school

Children were also asked, *In which language(s) do you watch TV or videos?* The reason for the inclusion of this question is that the language chosen by the child (or the parent) in the context of recreational activities is often a strong marker of identity. Children who read books or watch television programmes in their L1(s) tend to maintain closer links with their first language community, and are often encouraged by immigrant parents. The availability of TV programmes in languages other than English has grown remarkably in recent years, not only with widely available satellite channels, but also with the blurring of television and the internet (including popular websites such as youtube<sup>6</sup>). English is the most frequently noted language in which the children watch television (187 of 326 responses, occurring in 57.3% of language combinations). All but four of the children sampled in this study therefore watch television in English.

<sup>6</sup> [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

However, the children also watch television in a wide range of other languages. It is interesting to note that 30 children mention watching television in Irish. Recent years have seen an increase both in the quantity of children's television available, and in the quality of programming, in the Irish language. Twenty-nine further languages are mentioned, including French, Tagalog, Yoruba and Romanian. Notice that the total of the languages mentioned (326) is almost double the sample size (N=191); watching television is evidently a multilingual practice. Finally, the formulation of the question relating to watching television was highlighted by the participating schools. The pilot questionnaire asked *In which language(s) do you watch TV or videos?* The schools noted that most children at primary school have never encountered a video, and suggested that this be changed to DVD in the main project phase, advice which has been duly taken on board.

<b>Watch TV</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
English	187
Irish	30
French	19
Tagalog	13
Yoruba	10
Romanian	8
Spanish	6
Urdu	6
Chinese	4
Malay	4
Polish	4
Russian	4
Arabic	3
Moldovian	3
Albanian	2
Farsi	2
Hindi	2
Igbo	2
Indonesian	2
Italian	2
Japanese	2
Lithuanian	2
Bulgarian	1
Catalan	1
Dari/Pashto	1
Ukrainian	1
Punjabi	1
Czech	1
Visaya	1
Swedish	1
Unknown	1

**Table 13.4** Languages used to watch TV

## 14. Case studies of three language groups

Given the distribution of home languages outlined in Section 11, it is feasible to present more detailed information on the three largest language groups, i.e., the English, Irish and Tagalog language groups. The concept of 'language group' is derived from the children's responses to the question of which languages are used in the home. On the basis of their responses, children may belong to more than one language group, e.g. English and Tagalog, or Irish and English. Pseudolongitudinal profiles of each language group are derived from four reported language dimensions: reported language proficiency, language choice, language dominance, and language preference. Age-specific information on the three language groups is presented in Table 14.1.

<i>Age</i>	<i>English language group</i>	<i>Irish language group</i>	<i>Tagalog language group</i>
6	3	-	-
7	27	5	2
8	20	3	3
9	25	8	3
10	21	3	3
11	27	7	2
12	23	8	4
13	7	3	1
Unknown	18	1	1
Total	171	38	19

**Table 14.1** Number of pupils per language group and per age group

In Sections 15 and 16, the following age groups will be distinguished for creating pseudolongitudinal language profiles:

- English language group: ages 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12;
- Irish language group: age groups 7-9, 10-11, 12-13.

No pseudolongitudinal profile will be specified for the Tagalog language group due to the limited size of the pilot study's data set.

## 15. English language group

The status of the English language within diverse population groups is a much-discussed issue in the study of language use among immigration populations. Here, this is doubly so, as English is simultaneously the country's vernacular and also the dominant lingua franca. This section will report on use of the English language within the sample population.

<i>Age group</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Unk.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of pupils	3	27	20	25	21	27	23	7	18	171

**Table 15.1** Age of pupils

Of the total sample, 171 children (89.5%) reported on English language use. The pupils who reported English language use are aged between 6 and 13 years, and were pupils within primary grades 1-6.

<i>Birth country</i>	<i>Pupil</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>
Ireland	120	69	75
Philippines	19	20	21
Nigeria	7	27	25
India	3	5	4
Poland	2	2	2
Indonesia	2	2	2
Saudi Arabia	2	0	0
South Africa	2	1	3
Other Countries	13	37	36
Unknown	1	8	3
Total	171	171	171

**Table 15.2** Countries of birth of pupils, fathers and mothers

The majority (70.2% of the English language group of 171 children, or 62.8% of the total sample of 191 children) of pupils in the English language group were born in Ireland. However, the birth countries of parents reveal more about the diversity of this group, with 40.3% of children reporting that their father was born in Ireland, and 43.8% reporting that their mother was born in Ireland. The top birth countries other than Ireland are the Philippines and Nigeria.

Within the group of children who report on English language use, one in three children uses English exclusively. For two out of three children, it is a clear case of ‘English and...’ rather than ‘English or...’. The types of bilingualism recorded are outlined in Table 15.3 below. The co-occurrence of English with a wide range of other languages highlights the existence of multiple home language repertoires. The children report the use of English alongside 30 other languages. Irish is the most frequent language used in conjunction with English, with one in five children reporting on the use of Irish used in the home as well as English. We will consider this group in more detail in the next section. Tagalog (Filipino language variety) and Yoruba (Nigerian language variety) are the next most frequently used home languages; one in ten children report using Tagalog alongside English in the home. The Tagalog language group will be examined in Section 17.

<i><b>Languages</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
None (English only)	62
Irish	38
Tagalog	18
Yoruba	12
French	9
Romanian	6
Igbo	4
Malay	4
Spanish	4
Urdu	4
Arabic	3
Bisaya / Visaya	3
Polish	3
Russian	3
Farsi	2
Indonesian	2
Lithuanian	2
Moldovian	2
Albanian	1
Bulgarian	1
Catalan	1
Chinese	1
Hindi	1
Igala	1
Italian	1
Japanese	1
Lingala	1
Ukrainian	1
Portuguese	1
Punjabi	1
Swedish	1
Unknown	3

**Table 15.3** Languages other than English used at home by the English language group



Examining the ethnicity of the children who report on English language use in the home provides key information about the composition of this group. Eighty-three children record their ethnicity as Irish, just under half (48.5%) of the English language subset. The remaining children document 28 different ethnicities. Note again that the ethnicities with the highest frequencies are Nigerian ethnicities (total 14.6%: Yoruba, 8.8%; Nigerian, 3.5%; Igbo, 2.3%) and Filipino (11.7%).

<i><b>Ethnicity</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
Irish	83
Filipino	20
Yoruba	15
Nigerian	6
Indian	5
Igbo	4
Moldovian	3
Romanian	3
Lithuanian	2
Polish	2
Albanian	2
Indonesian	2
Pakistani	2
English	1
Han Chinese	1
Anglo-Ukrainian	1
Angolan	1
Bulgarian	1
Congolese	1
Finnish	1
French	1
Ghanaian	1
Indian-Irish	1
Iranian	1
Italian	1
Sudanese	1
Syrian	1
Syrian-Irish	1
Ukrainian	1
Missing	6
Total	171

**Table 15.4** Ethnicity of the English language group

### Pseudolongitudinal profile of the English language group

The pseudolongitudinal profile of the English language group is derived from four reported language dimensions: reported language proficiency (Figure 15.1), language choice (Figure 15.2a and 15.2b), language dominance (Figure 15.3) and language preference (Figure 15.4).

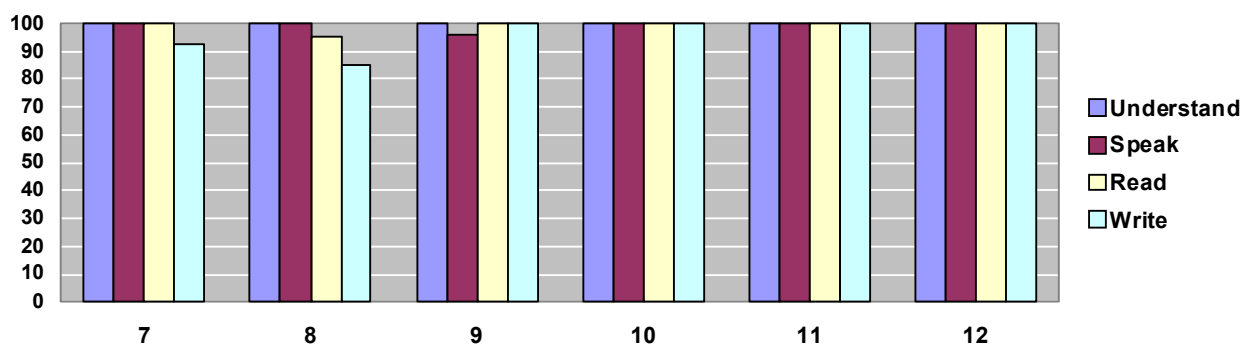
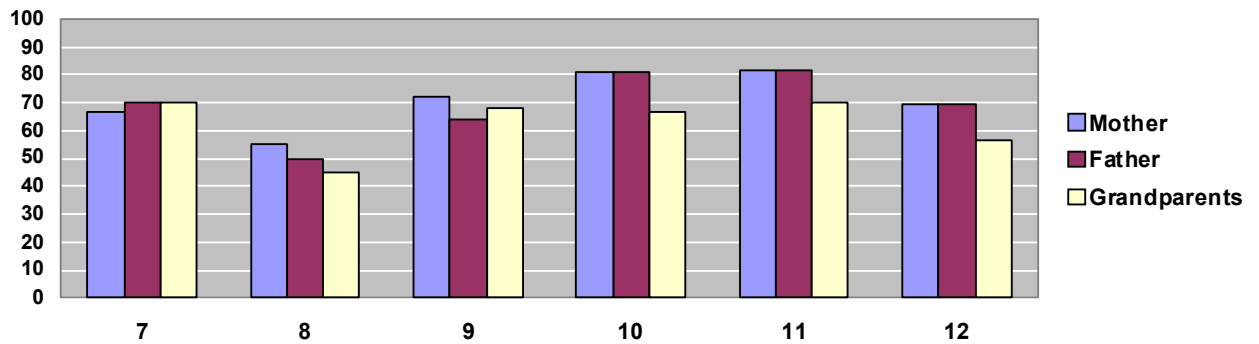


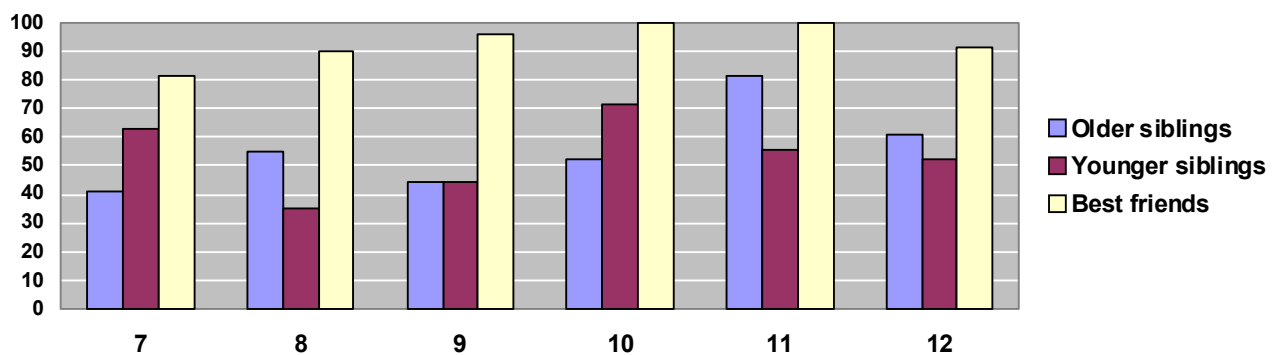
Figure 15.1 Proficiency in English (N inf. = 143)

Figure 15.1 provides data on children's proficiency in English for those who have recorded use of English in the home (Question 11 of the survey). All four language skills (understand/speak/read/write) in English are reported by all children aged 10-12 up to almost 100%, except for some lower scores for some skills in age groups 7-9. Lower scores of proficiency in writing (age 7 group), reading and writing (age 8 group) and speaking (age 9 group) are recorded.

Language choice is apparent in responses to Question 12 of the survey (*Which language do you use speak at home with your mother/father/grandparents*, Figure 15.2a; *with your older siblings/younger siblings/best friends*, Figure 15.2b). At home, 55-81% of all age groups report usually speaking English with their mother, 50-81% with their father, 45-80% with their grandparents, 41-81% with their older siblings, 35-71% with their younger siblings, and 81-100% with their best friends. The reported choice for English with best friends is particularly high, and may be understood within a context where children select to use English as a lingua franca with children from language backgrounds other than their own, or indeed select to use English with children who share the same other language. Anecdotal evidence records immigrant children who share the same other language choosing to speak the language of the host community to one another both in the school playground and at home. It seems that the shift towards English language use here is located within friendships rather than family connections, where a sizeable proportion of the responses record using a language other than English in a family setting.

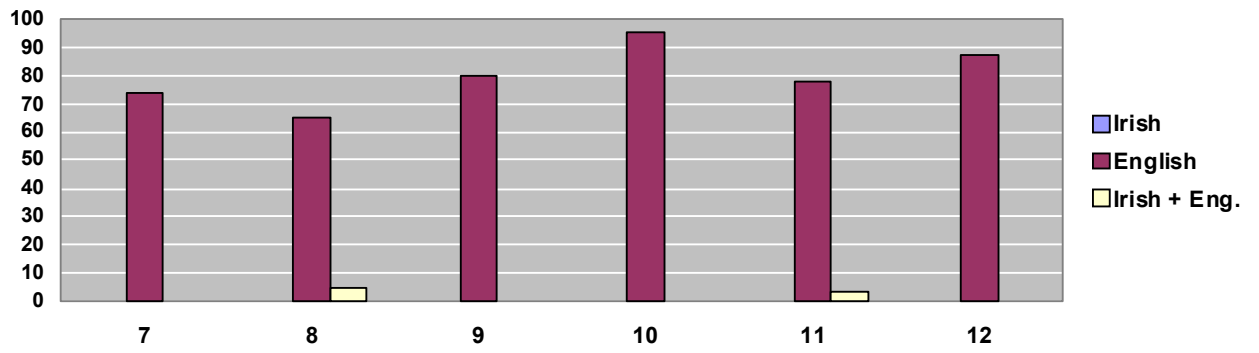


**Figure 15.2a** Choice of English (N inf. = 143)

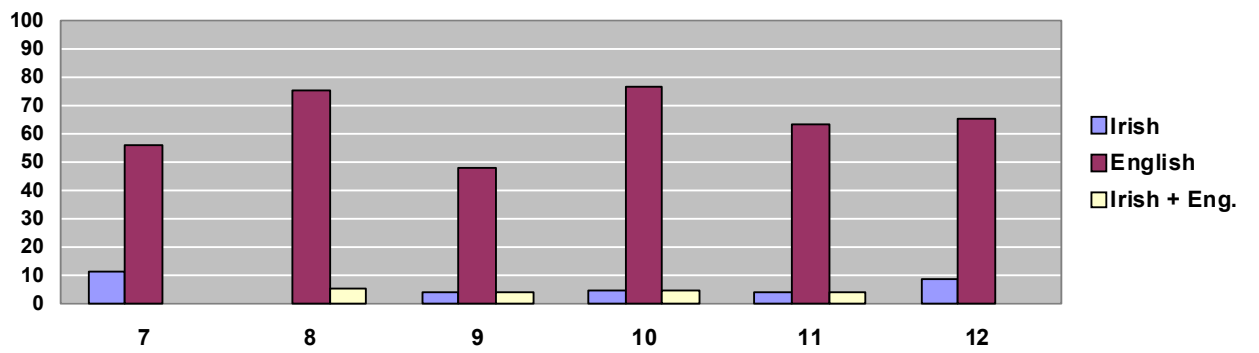


**Figure 15.2b** Choice of English (N inf. = 143)

Turning now to language dominance (Figure 15.3, *Which language do you speak best?*) and language preference (Figure 15.4, *Which language do you like to speak most?*), in English or Irish, dominance in English is reported by 65-95% of all age groups. Dominance in Irish is not reported. Balanced bilingualism in English and Irish is reported by only 4-5% of the pupils in two age groups (ages 8 and 11), and is only reported by 0-5% of all age groups. Preference for English is reported by 48-76% of all age groups, preference for Irish by only 4-11%. It is interesting to note that preference for Irish outstrips any dominance of Irish. The following section will examine children who reported use of Irish in the home in more detail.



**Figure 15.3** Dominance in Irish or English (N inf. = 143)



**Figure 15.4** Preference for Irish or English (N inf. = 143)

## 16. Irish language group

This section examines the use of the Irish language in the home by pupils in primary grades 1-6. Responses are collated by three age groups, 7-9, 10-11, 12-13. Thirty-eight instances of use of Irish in the home were recorded by pupils (Table 16.1).

	<i>Age group 1</i>			<i>Age group 2</i>		<i>Age group 3</i>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Unk.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of pupils	5	3	8	3	7	8	3	1	38
Total	16			10		11			

**Table 16.1** Age of pupils

<i>Birth country</i>	<i>Pupil</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>
Ireland	35	31	30
China	1	1	1
Philippines	1	1	1
Sudan	1	1	1
Other Countries	0	4	5
Unknown	0	0	0
Total	38	38	38

**Table 16.2** Countries of birth of pupils, fathers and mothers

Almost all the instances of Irish use in the home are recorded by children who were born in Ireland, with parents also born in Ireland, which confirms expectations. Three other named countries of birth are mentioned for the pupils, and their parents (China, the Philippines and Sudan).

<i>Languages</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
None (Irish only)	0
English	38
French	3
Arabic	1
Chinese	1
Igbo	1
Romanian	1
Swedish	1
Tagalog	1
Ukrainian	1
Yoruba	1
Unknown	1

**Table 16.3** Languages used at home by the Irish language group apart from Irish

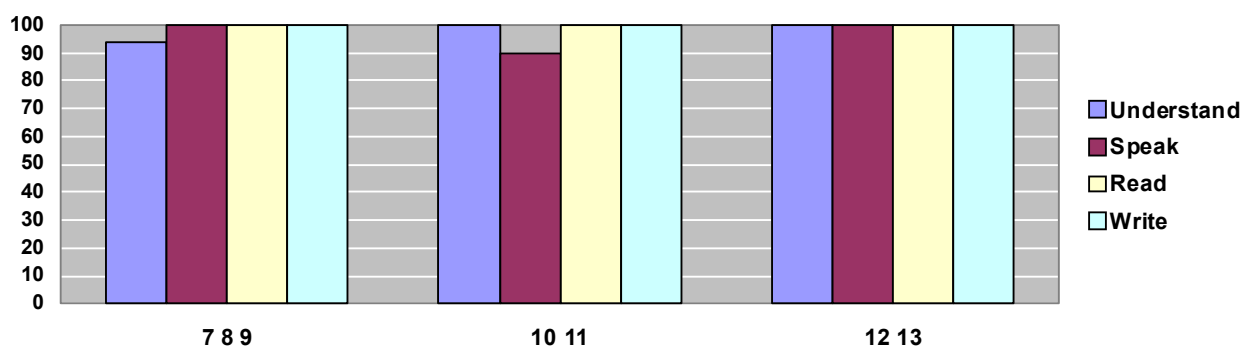
There are no instances of exclusive Irish language use in the home within this sample. Irish co-occurs with English in all instances. This follows wider patterns of bilingualism in Ireland, where families where Irish is spoken may have only one Irish-speaking parent. The co-occurrence of Irish with nine languages (Table 16.3) other than English points to the diversification of Irish/English combination, and the increasing numbers of multilingual families where Irish is spoken in addition to other languages. The ethnicity of the children who report on use of Irish in the home (Table 16.4) again show Irish as the highest frequency of responses (30 responses), but a sizeable minority of seven other ethnicities (Han Chinese, Igbo, Yoruba, Filipino, Finnish, Sudanese, Ukrainian), each related to one household where Irish is used. A recent national survey of attitudes towards Irish, and competence in and use of Irish concluded that, in terms of language attitudes, ‘those not born in Ireland have levels of positive aspiration for Irish similar to those of Irish-born’ (Mac Gréil and Rhatigan 2009: ix).

<i><b>Ethnicity</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
Irish	30
Han Chinese	1
Igbo	1
Yoruba	1
Filipino	1
Finnish	1
Sudanese	1
Ukrainian	1
Total	37
Missing	1
Total	38

**Table 16.4** Ethnicity of the Irish language group

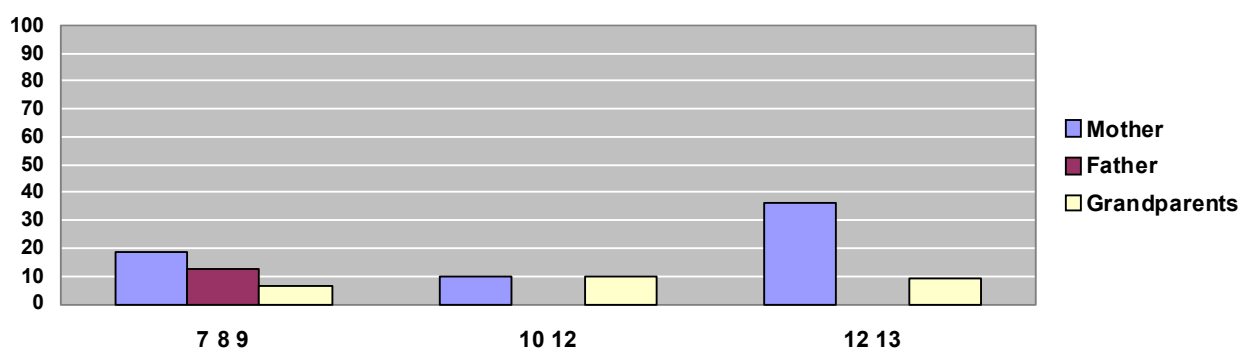
### Pseudolongitudinal profile of the Irish language group

Pseudolongitudinal profiles for the Irish language group were derived from four reported language dimensions: reported language proficiency (Figure 16.1), language choice (Figure 16.2), language dominance (Figure 16.3) and language preference (Figure 16.4).



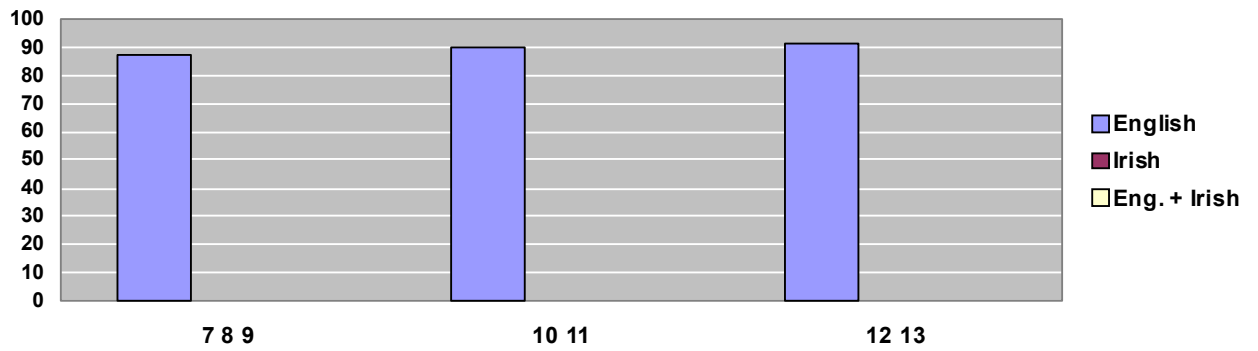
**Figure 16.1** Proficiency in Irish (N inf. = 37)

Turning firstly to language proficiency (Figure 16.1), all four language skills in Irish are reported up to almost 100% by all three age groups except for two lower scores for two skills in the age groups 7-9 (understanding) and 10-11 (speaking). In homes where Irish is spoken, children are proficient users of the language across the four skill areas.

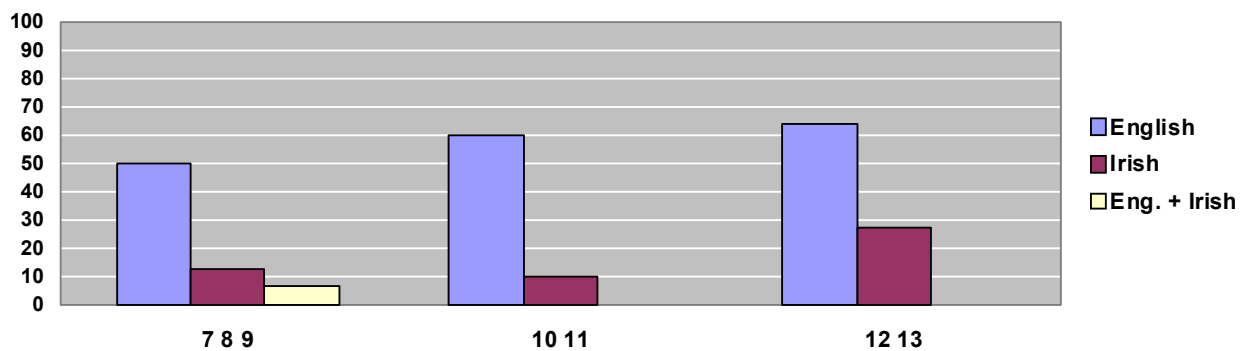


**Figure 16.2** Choice of Irish (N inf. = 37)

In terms of language choice (Figure 16.2), at home, only 10-36% of all age groups report usually speaking Irish with their mother, fewer report speaking Irish with their father (0-13%), or with their grandparents 6-10%. None of the pupils report usually speaking Irish at home with their older siblings or younger siblings, or with their best friends.



**Figure 16.3** Dominance in English or Irish (N inf. = 37)



**Figure 16.4** Preference for English or Irish (N inf. = 37)

Language dominance (Figure 16.3) and language preference (Figure 16.4) record that whilst there is a strong dominance in English, reported by 88-91% of all age groups, with no dominance in Irish or balanced bilingualism, some preference for Irish can be noted. Preference for English is increasingly reported by 50%, 60% and 63% of the respective age groups, whilst preference for Irish is reported by 13%, 10% and 27% of the respective age groups. Balanced Irish/English preference is only reported by 6% of the youngest age groups (7-9 years). The increase in preference for Irish in the age groups of 12-13 may reflect growing metalinguistic awareness.



## 17. Tagalog language group

The final case study is that of the Tagalog language group. Tagalog is a Filipino language variety, spoken by some 24,000,000 speakers in the world, of whom approximately 2,000,000 reside outside of the Philippines (Lewis 2009). Nineteen primary school pupils reported use of Tagalog in their home, ranging from ages 7 to 13 (Table 17.1).

<i>Age group</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Unk.</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Number of pupils</b>	2	3	3	3	2	4	1	1	19

**Table 17.1** Age of pupils

The number of responses is not sufficient to construct pseudolongitudinal language profiles. Data related to birth country, other language use and ethnicity is reported below.

<i>Birth country</i>	<i>Pupil</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Mother</i>
Philippines	18	18	19
Other Countries	1	1	0
Unknown	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	19	19	19

**Table 17.2** Countries of birth of pupils, fathers and mothers

It can be noted that the children who record use of Tagalog in their home were also born in the Philippines, along with both parents (Table 17.2). Apart from Tagalog, a range of languages are also used in the homes described. There is only one instance of exclusive Tagalog use. The predominant pattern is the co-occurrence of Tagalog and English (Table 17.3), although four other languages are mentioned as spoken alongside Tagalog (Bisaya – language variety spoken in Malaysia/Brunei; Catalan; French; Irish). The discrepancy in totals is due to the fact that there is a predictably larger number of languages spoken than speakers, due to multilingual households.

<i>Languages</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
None (Tagalog only)	1
English	18
Bisaya /Visaya	3
Catalan	1
French	1
Irish	1

**Table 17.3** Languages used at home by the Tagalog language group apart from Tagalog

The close mapping of language and ethnicity in the case of Tagalog and the Filipino community can be seen in Table 17.4, where all children but one in the Tagalog language group record their ethnicity as Filipino.

<i><b>Ethnicity</b></i>	<i><b>Frequency</b></i>
Filipino	18
Missing	1
Total	19

**Table 17.4** Ethnicity reported by the Tagalog language group

## 18. Conclusions and follow-up study

The interconnected phenomena of urbanization, globalization and migration, and their social impact, are all shaped in a very fundamental way by language. Urban centres are places of significant linguistic diversity, language maintenance and language loss. The collection, analysis and comparison of data on home language use in a multicultural school population plays a crucial role in the definition and identification of multilingualism, which in turn is indicative of patterns of diversity in the wider population of a city. Home language data offer valuable insights into the distribution and vitality of home languages across different population groups, raising public awareness of multilingualism. Such data are also indispensable tools for educational planning and policy. Piloting the survey of home languages confirms Dublin as a multilingual city. Data from our sample of 191 children from two primary schools show that:

- 33 different languages are used at home
- One in three children was born abroad (34%, compared with 14.8% of the total population according to the 2006 census)
- 63% of the children's fathers were born outside Ireland
- 60% of the children's mothers were born outside Ireland
- 21 birth countries other than Ireland were recorded for children's births
- 29 different countries of birth for children's fathers
- 27 different countries of birth for children's mothers
- The top three birth countries for children and their parents were the Philippines, Nigeria and Poland
- 27 different single ethnicities were recorded
- 44.5% children recorded their ethnicity as Irish
- 50.3% children recorded their ethnicity as other than Irish

The results of this current study indicate Dublin to be a city of significant linguistic diversity worth investigating in much greater detail. As mentioned in the Introduction to this report, the experiences and outcomes of this pilot instrument, including the design of the survey form, will be utilized in planning a follow-up study in Dublin at large. The focus will be on all ordinary national schools in the Dublin City school district, amongst children from First Class to Sixth Class (primary grades one to six). Table 18.1 gives an outline of the total number of primary school children across the

Dublin City school district, based on statistics from 2008 (Department of Education and Science 2009). Table 18.2 reviews the European cities from North to South where similar home language surveys have already been conducted (Extra and Yağmur 2004), and outlines overall pupil numbers, sample size and coverage.

<i>Number of ordinary primary (national) schools</i>	<i>Number of classes</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>
189	1,825	41,186

**Table 18.1** Overview of primary schools in Dublin City school district

	<i>Total number of pupils</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Coverage</i>
Göteborg	36,100	21,300	59%
Hamburg	54,900	46,000	84%
The Hague	41,170	27,900	68%
Brussels*	11,500	10,300	90%
Lyon	60,000	11,650	19%
Madrid	202,000	30,000	15%

**Table 18.2** Comparison of European participation and coverage rates  
(Extra and Yağmur 2004: 115) (\*Dutch-medium schools only)

The ambition of the large-scale home language survey in Dublin is to cover at least 80% of all primary school children attending First Class through to Sixth Class (aged 6 to 12) in the Dublin City school district. This research project will be the first large-scale survey of home language use in Ireland. A data set of this size will contain a wealth of information about which languages are spoken in the city of Dublin, intergenerational language transmission and the multilingual profiles of thousands of school children and their families. The investigation will consist of an extensive survey of children's reported language registers, language proficiency, language dominance and language choice, and will answer key questions such as:

- Which languages are most spoken in Dublin city?
- What is the 'language capital' of the children in Dublin's primary schools?
- How multilingual are the next generations of children in Dublin likely to become?
- Is there a tendency for multilingualism to be replaced by monolingualism in English?
- Is there intergenerational transmission of immigrant minority languages in the home, one of the prerequisites for language maintenance?
- Against what linguistic backdrop might home language instruction in immigrant minority languages develop in Ireland?
- To what degree do different immigrant communities hold their language(s) as a core value of their cultural identity in the context of migration?

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## Appendix

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Many children,  
many languages!



Languages at home  
and at school in Dublin

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# Many children, many languages!



This is a project about all the languages children speak at home and at school. We want to find **how many languages** primary school children speak, and **which languages** you speak, write and learn at school and at home.

The project is organised by Trinity College Dublin, and your school has agreed to help us. Your parent/carer is happy for you to answer a questionnaire in class about the languages you know.

What you say in the questionnaire will be completely **private** and will help us to build up a picture of all languages spoken by children in your class. To make that picture as complete as possible we ask your age, whether you are a girl or boy and where you (and your parents) were born.

If you do not want to answer the questionnaire, just give this letter back to your teacher, it's ok to say 'no thanks'. If you do want to answer the questions, please fill in the form that your teacher gives you.

You answer the questions by filling in little circles ( o ). It will take about 30 minutes to answer the questions. Your teacher will explain everything before you start and will help if you do not understand a question. Please answer as many questions as you feel happy to answer.

We will put your answers into a computer, and make graphs about the languages spoken in your school. We will then display the information in your school for you to see.

For more information about this project, please ask your teacher!



# Many children, many languages!

Trinity College Dublin

School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences

Dr Lorna Carson, Lecturer in Applied Linguistics

1st June, 2009



Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to ask your consent for your child's participation in a research project about languages in Dublin entitled **Many Children, Many Languages**. This is part of a series of studies organized by Professor Guus Extra in the Netherlands on multilingualism, which has already been carried out in nine different European cities. I am the principal investigator of the Irish project. We are currently conducting a pilot survey in two primary schools, in order to prepare for the larger Dublin-wide project which is planned for 2010-2011. The information leaflet which accompanies this letter explains the project in more detail.

If you agree, we will ask your child to complete a short, simple questionnaire in class, with the help of their teacher, about the languages they speak, write and learn. Before we start, we will ask your child if they want to answer these questions—we hope they will be happy to do this, but of course, they don't have to if they don't want to. It should take about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire in class. It is an **anonymous** questionnaire: we do not need to know your child's name. As well as asking them about the languages they speak and write, we will ask their age, gender, place of birth and ethnicity. We ask these questions as we are interested in the overall language profile of the school, we will not keep any records about individual pupils. We ask about place of birth and ethnicity as we are interested in bilingualism and whether children continue to speak the same languages as other family members.

All information will be completely confidential, and held in a secure location in a locked office in Trinity College. The results will be processed automatically by computer, and transformed into graphs and tables which will provide a multilingual profile of the school and overall linguistic patterns. We will not use or share any information about individual pupils with anybody.

You may contact me at any time for further information, by telephone (01 896 4035) or by email ([carsonle@tcd.ie](mailto:carsonle@tcd.ie)). You may also speak to the Principal at your child's school, or to their teacher.

With thanks, *Lorna Carson*

**I understand what is involved in this study, and I give permission for my child to complete the questionnaire. I have received a copy of the information leaflet.**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ (This name will NOT be linked to your child's questionnaire; names are only needed for the class teacher to distribute questionnaires)

Parent/carers' name (CAPITALS): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carers' signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

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### About the Many Children, Many Languages project

This project is part of a European study about the different languages spoken by children in cities. It has already asked school children in nine different European cities about the languages they can speak and write, and the languages they like to learn.

The European project leader is Professor Guus Extra, who works in the Netherlands. The Irish project leader is Lorna Carson; she works at the Centre for Language and Communication Studies at Trinity College Dublin. The project described in this leaflet is the first part (pilot study) of a Dublin-wide research project.

### What is the purpose of this project?

This is a university project organized by Trinity College Dublin, which will help schools and local communities learn more about the many languages spoken in our city.

In this project, we want to find out:

- **How many different languages** are spoken in Dublin city by primary school children and their families
- **Which languages** children like to speak, write and learn at home and at school

### Why is this important?

Because we don't have very much information at all on how many languages people speak in Dublin, or how much people use different languages. This project asks *children* about languages they speak and write, because children are the future! We will also be able to compare this information with what we know about languages in other European cities like Vienna, Vilnius and Madrid.

### How does the project work?

In this first part of the project, we will collect information from 300 children in two primary schools, and we will use this information to help design the main project. The main project will take place in 2010-2011, and information about languages will be collected from all primary schools in Dublin City who decide to take part.

The project uses a very simple questionnaire, with just under 20 questions. We will ask you if you agree to take part, and we will ask your parent/carer to give their permission too. A researcher will come to your school, and give your teacher questionnaires for your class to complete. You complete the questionnaire by filling in little circles ( o ). This questionnaire will then be scanned by a computer. We will turn the computer results into graphs. We will then use these graphs to discover more about the languages you speak at home and at school. We will come back to your school and display the graphs and information about languages for you.

### Why is my school taking part?

Your school is taking part in this project because your School Principal and Teacher have agreed to help us. The information we find out about languages in the first part of this project at your school will help us ask questions to more than 200 other schools in the Dublin City school district in the next few years.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

The questionnaire is anonymous — that means that we do not need to know your name. The only information we need is your school code (your Teacher will fill this in), your age, and whether you are a boy or a girl. All the information that you give us will kept completely confidential — no-one will be able to know what you said in your questionnaire.

The design of this project has been approved by the Research Ethics committee of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences, Trinity College Dublin.

# Multilingualism in Dublin

## *Home language use among primary school children*

The interconnected phenomena of urbanization, globalization and migration, and their social impact, are all shaped in a very fundamental way by language. Urban centres such as Dublin are places of significant linguistic diversity, language maintenance and language loss. Whilst collecting reliable information on the diversity of population groups is no easy enterprise, examining languages used in the home by children is a particularly useful way to define and identify patterns of multilingualism in the city at large. Surveying home language use provides insight into the distribution and vitality of home languages across different population groups, and helps raise public awareness of multilingualism.

The status of immigrant languages at home and at school in six European cities has recently been documented in the crossnational and crosslinguistic *Multilingual Cities Project*. Göteborg, Hamburg, The Hague, Brussels, Lyon and Madrid have been surveyed, and now Dublin joins their ranks. The present report outlines the rationale and background of this investigation, and describes the aims, methods and outcomes of the pilot phase of the Dublin project.

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**Professor Guus Extra** holds the Chair of Language and Minorities at Tilburg University, the Netherlands, in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Languages and Culture Studies. He has an extensive record in research and publications on second language acquisition, first language use/maintenance/loss by immigrant minority groups, and multilingualism and education.

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